

THE 4452!a
Godly Mans Ark,
O R

City of Refuge in the Day of his
D I S T R E S S.

Discovered in divers Sermons :

The first of which was Preached at the
Funeral of Mistrers *Elizabeth Moore*.

The other four were afterwards Preach-
ed, and are all of them now made pub-
lick, for the Supportation and Conso-
lation of the Saints of God, in the
Hour of Tribulation.

*Hereunto are annexed Mrs. Moores Evi-
dences for Heaven, Composed and Col-
lected by her in the time of her Health,
for her Comfort in the time of Sickness.*

By E. D. CALAMY, B. D. late Pastor of the Church
at Aldermanbury.

The 17th. Edition Corrected and Amended.

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John Hancock in Castle Alley near the Royal
Exchange. 1693.

THE

Godly Man's Attire

DISTRESS



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To those of
Aldermanbury-Parish,
TOGETHER,

With all others who attend constantly upon
the Word of God there Preached, and
more especially to such of them, who are
admitted to partake of the Lords Supper
there Administred.

Beloved in the Lord:

I Need not spend much time in giving you an account, how these ensuing Sermons come to be made publick. It is not because they are more worthy than those which you hear weekly; Nay, I may truly say (without boasting) they are less worthy (though I think none of them much worth) than many others. It is not because I desire to be in Print; but it is,

I. To present you with the Pattern of a Woman, whom God did pick out to make an example of great affliction, and great patience, that when you come into

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great Troubles, you may be Comforted with those Comforts with which she was Comforted.

2. To acquaint you with the pains she took, and with her Diligence in time of Health, to make her Salvation sure; That so you may be provoked to lay up Suitable, Seasonable, and sufficient provision against an evil Day, and not have your Evidences for Heaven to get in the Hour of Adversity.

It is the grand sin of most People, to delay and pro-
rögue their Solemn preparation for affliction and
sickness, till they come to be sick, and in affliction.
There are many in Hell, who purposed to Repent, but

were prevented by Death; therefore
Bona pro- Bernard saith, Good purposes go to
posita ge- Hell, and only good performances
hennam in- lead into Heaven.

trant, bona To prevent your delaying and de-
opera c- ferring to provide for Affliction, these
Coelum. Sermons are Printed, and to perswade
you, that whatsoever you do for Hea-
ven, you would do it speedily, and with all your
strength.

The Subjects handled are so plain and easie, and
the stile so rude and unpolished, that I was resolved
to have buried them in perpetual Oblivion, had I not
been conquered by this following (together with the
fore-mentioned) consideration, that they are calcu-
lated only for people under great troubles, at which
times, learned debates about Discipline, and con-
troverted points of Divinity, painted Eloquence,
and curious Language, are of very little esteem and
account. Afflicted Consciences are oftentimes puz-
led, but never comforted with doubtful Disputations.
Neat and elegant expressions may skin over, but
cannot cure Spiritual Diseases. Nothing can heal a
wounded Conscience, and keepe a Man from sinking
into

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into despondency in the day of great Tribulation, but a real, right, and particular Application of the Promises; to help a doubting Christian to perform this great work, there are thirteen plain Rules and Directions laid down in the following Treatise. My Prayer is, that they may prove useful and successful.

Seneca indeed comforts his friend Polybius, and persuades him to bear his afflictions patiently, because he was the Emperors Favorite, and tells him, That it was not lawful for him to complain, while Cæsar was his Friend: But this was but a poor Cordial: For Cæsar himself a little while after, was so miserable, that he had not a friend to help him, much less was he able to help his Friend. The Word of God affords a better Cordial; it bids a true Child of God not to be overmuch dejected under the greatest Affliction, because he is Gods Favorite; It tells him, That it is not lawful for him to complain, while God is his Friend, and the Promises of God his rich portion, and inheritance. Though Job lost all he had, yet he lost nothing, because he lost not his God, who is All in All, and they who have him, have All.

Has tibi
non est de
fortuna
conqueri
salvo Cæ
sare.

Has tibi
non est de
fortuna
conqueri
salvo Deo
& salvis
promissio
nibus Dei.

My purpose at first was only to have Printed the Sermon Preached at Mrs. Moores Funeral, together with her Evidences for Heaven, Collected by her in the time of her Health. But the Importunity of Friends, hath over-swayed me, and caused me to add four more; Preached immediately afterwards on the same Text.

And now (Dearly Beloved) having this fair opportunity

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tunity to speak to you in writing, give mee leave to propound and lay before you some Cautions and Admonitions; some Rules and Directions for the right ordering of your Lives and Conversations in these dangerous and divided times, that so you may be able after my Decease, to have them in perpetual remembrance.

1. Take heed of mistaking in the great work of Believing and Repenting. Faith and Repentance are the two great Gospel-Graces: And the Reason why so many miscarry to all eternity, is not for want of them (such as they are) but upon a pure mistake, in thinking they have them, when they have but a shadow of them. Where one goeth to Hell by desperation, hundreds go thither by Presumption. O! quam multi cum hac vana fide, & vana spe ad æternos labores descendunt; How many thousands go to Hell with a vain Faith, and hope of Heaven! And therefore be much in examination, whether your Faith be right or no. Examine your
2 Cor. 13. selves, whether ye be in the Faith,
5. yroove pour own selves. To be mistaken in the great work of Believing is

to be necessitated to Damnation: For he that believes not, shall be Damned. Ask

Mark 16. your Souls often, whether
16. your Repen-

tance be of a right Stamp, or no; whether it be a Repentance unto Life, a Repentance never to be repented of. To be mistaken in purchasing of Lands, can but hurt your outward Estates; but to be mistaken in the Graces of Faith and Repentance, will undoe your Souls to all Eternity. What the Characters of a true Faith and true Repentance are, you have frequently heard, I will not now repeat them, Only remember that self-flattery, is self-mockery; that Soul-delusion, is Soul-

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soul-damnation. *Pray unto God to deliver you from that great murderer of Souls, the sin of Presumption.*

2. *Take heed (as I have said) of delaying, and putting off the great work of providing for Heaven, till sickness or old-age. The Lord Christ commands you, to seek first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, &c. First, before other things, first, more than other things. You must seek after Heaven in the first and chief place, and if you seek it in the least and last place, you will never obtain it. In matters of weight, delay is dangerous. Abigail made haste to prevent David's fury. Rahab made haste to hang out her Scarlet Thread. The Salvation of your Souls is a matter of the greatest concernment, and to delay providing for it, is not only a sin against the Command of Christ, but a sleighing of the Heaven of Christ, How justly may God deny to you (who refuse when he calls) either space, or grace, to turn to him, and say to you, as it is reported, he said to a man, who desired to repent in his old age, Ubi consumpsisti farinam, ibi consume furem; Where you have spent your Flower, there go spend your Bran. Therefore let my counsel be acceptable to you; Make Christ your unum necessarium, your one thing necessary, and Heaven your primum quærite; Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness. Say Psal. 119. 60. with David, I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

3. *Take heed of resting in the Ministry of Man. You must not despise the teachings of Orthodox Ministers lawfully called (for he that despiseth them despiseth Christ; he that is above their teachings, is above the teachings of Christ, for Christ teacheth by them; They are his Eph. 3. 17.*

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2 Cor. 5. 20. Ambassadors, and they preach not only in his Name, but in his stead) yet you must not rest satisfied with the teachings of Men, but pray, that while the Minister speaks to your Ears, God would speak to your Hearts. That God would fulfil that blessed Promise, Isa. 54. 13. And all thy Children shall be taught of God. That he would give you an Unction from the Holy

1 Joh. 2. 20. One to teach you all things. That Psal. 68. 24. you may see the goings of God in his Sanctuary, you may behold the beauty of the Lord, and see his Pow-

Psal. 27. 4. er and Glory in his Holy Temple. In

Psal. 63. 2. a word, That God would give you, not only the Presence of Ordinances, but his Presence in them. That you may experimentally know, what it is to enjoy Communion with God in Gospel Administrations.

4. Take heed of formality, customariness, and carelessness in the performance of Holy Duties. He that serves God carelessly, brings a curse upon himself instead of a blessing. For cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently. He that serves God formally and customarily, doth not serve him, but mock him. If the Israelites had brought the skin of a Beast for Sacrifice, instead of a Beast, it would have been counted a mocking of God, rather than a worshipping of him. So do they who serve God negligently and formally.

5. Be not contented to have a name to be godly and religious, but labour to be really such as you are supposed by others to be. Remember what Christ saith of the Church of Sardis, Rev. 3. 2. That she had a name to live, but was dead. What will it profit you to be thought by men to be godly, if God knows that you are ungodly?

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ungodly? *What will it advantage you to seem to go to Heaven, and yet at last to miss of it? O labour to be Christians, not only in word, but in deed, and in truth, not only by outward profession, but by a holy Conversation. Rest not satisfied with a less degree of Grace than that which will bring you to Heaven. It will be a double Hell, to go within an inch of Heaven, and yet at last to miscarry.*

6. *Remember what Christ saith of Capernaum. The Capernaïtes were not so bad as the Gadarens, who desired Christ to depart from them: much less as the Nazarites, who thrust Christ out of their Coasts. For they heard him* Luke. 4. 19. *preach every Sabbath day, and were a-* Luke. 4. 32. *stonished at his Doctrine. And yet because they did not sincerely practice what was taught them, Christ pronounceth a heavy doom against them, Mat. 11. 23, 24. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of Judgment than for thee. It is not enough to praise the Sermons you hear, to admire, and stand astonished at the Doctrine delivered, if you do not practise what is preached. If you do not live Sermons as well as hear them, it shall be easier for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of Judgment than for you.*

7. *Take heed that the love of the World doth not eat out the heart of Religion, and at last, Religion it self out of your hearts: Remember what the Apostle Paul saith, That* 1 Tim. 6. 10. *the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have covered after,*

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they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

1 Joh. 2. 15. *And what the Apostle John saith,*

Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him. *There is no sin so contrary to true*

John 3. 3. *saintship, as worldly-mindedness. A*

Saint is one who hath much of Heaven in him, and is much in Heaven. *A Saint is one whose original is*

from Heaven, he is born from above, his name is written in Heaven, his meditations, affections and conversation is in Heaven. He is one who is elected to things above, and called to partake of Heaven and Eternal happiness: And for such a man to mind earthly things, is a sin of the first magnitude.

Therefore the Apostle would not have Eph. 3. 3. *covetousness so much as named amongst Christians. There is no sin*

more defiles the Soul. It will besmear you, and make you Spiritual Blackamores, and Chimney-sweepers in Gods sight. There is no sin that doth

more dead and dull the heart in the doing of good duties. It hinders a man both from,

Mat 22. 5. *and in Ordinances. The Farmer and Merchant made light of the call of Christ, and one went to his Farm, the other to his Merchandize, There is no sin will more eclipse the Light of Gods Countenance from shining upon you. The Moon is never in the Eclipse, but when the Earth comes between us and the Sun. A Child of God is seldom without the light of Gods Countenance, unless it be through the overmuch love of the World. No sin will more hinder your flight up to Heaven. The Ostrich cannot fly high because of the shortness*

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of her Wings. Jacob was forced in his travelling towards Canaan to go slowly and softly, because of his multitude of Children, of Flocks and Herds. And therefore let me again beseech you to take heed of worldly mindedness; this will quickly betray you into Apostacy from Christ, and from the truths of Christ, A man who loves the World, will (Judas like) betray Christ for thirty pieces, He will part with his Religion, rather than with his Estate. This sin is the root of all evil, it exposeth a man to all Temptations, to hurtful lusts, to all errors, and all kind of sorrows: It will drown your Souls in Perdition. He that seeks things below, shall have his Heaven below. The Apostle saith expressly, that they who mind earthly things, their end is damnation. Therefore let me once again repeat it; take heed lest you be like the Thorny ground. Let not the cares, riches, and pleasures of the World choke the good Seed that is weekly sown in your Hearts.

Gen. 33. 13, 14.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Col. 3. 2. Phil. 3. 19.

8. Let it be your Morning and Evening thought what shall become of you to all Eternity, and labour so to use things temporal, as not to lose the things that are eternal. Remember that this life is a moment upon which eternity depends, and according as you spend this moment, so you shall be for ever happy, or for ever miserable. Remember that the pleasures of sin are but for a moment, but the punishments of sin are everlasting.

Momentum unde pendet aeternitas.

Momentaneum quod delectat, aeternum quod cruciat.

9. Lock

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9. Look upon Sin as the greatest of evils, *greater than poverty, imprisonment, banishment, or death it self; chuse the greatest* Anselme. Affliction rather than commit the least sin. *If Hell were on the one side, and Sin on the other, chuse rather to go into Hell, than to sin against God. For Sin is a greater evil than Hell, because it is the cause of Hell, and more opposite to God (who is the chiefest good) than Hell is. For God is the Author of Hell (which he hath provided for all unbelievers, and impenitent persons;) But it is blasphemy in the highest degree, to say, That he is the Author of sin. Look upon Christ as the greatest good, greater than health, wealth, liberty, or life, Love Christ more than you love your Estates, or Lives; He that loves Christ more than the World will not forsake Christ to embrace the World, He that fears sin more than affliction, will not sin to avoid affliction.*

10. Rest not contented with that measure of Grace you have attained unto; but labour to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ: Remember that the Scripture doth not only persuade you to get into Christ but to grow up into Christ; not only to be Righteous, but to be filled Eph. 4. 15. with the fruits of Righteousness, &c. Luk. 12. 48. Remember that saying of Christ, To whom much is given, of them much is required. God hath given you much, you have plentiful means of Salvation, and you have had them many years, he expects from you, not only good fruit, but much good fruit; not only thirty-fold, and sixty-fold, but an hundred-fold, Where the Husbandman bestows most cost, he expects most fruit. The more a Merchant adventures by Sea, the greater return he looks for. God hath done more for you, than for many

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many others ; and therefore he expects that you should do some singular thing for him. He looks you should be more humble, more Heavenly, more knowing than others. If the Sun should give no more light than a little Candle, to what purpose hath God given it so much light ? If you that have Sun-like Abilities, do no more good, than those who have but half your abilities, to what purpose have you them ? It is a true saying : As our gifts increase, so must our account in- Crescenti-
bus donis
crescunt
rationes
donorum.
crease. You shall answer at the great Day, not only for your Gifts, but for the measure of them. Remember that God doth not only require service from you, but service proportionable to the means, and Mercies you enjoy.

He that hath but one Talent, shall answer but for one, but you that have five or ten Talents, must be answerable according to the quantity, as well as the quality of them.

II. Labour to diffuse those graces, which God hath given you, and to communicate them to those with whom you converse. True Grace is of a spreading nature, and therefore compared to leaven, which diffuseth it self into the whole lump, and to Salt, that seasoneth all those things, with which it is mingled. As soon as the Woman of Samaria had found out the Messias, she John 4. 25,
leaves her Water-Pot, and goeth into the 30.
City, to tell others what God had done Act 10. 24.
for her. As soon as Cornelius had received the Message from the Angel, to send for Peter, he calls together his Kinsmen and near Friends, that they, together with him, might be made partakers of Gospel-Grace. A True Christian is like a Needle touched with the Loadstone. A
Needle

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Needle (truly touched) draweth another, and that will draw another, and that another: *Whosoever hath his heart truly touched by effectual Grace, will labour to Convert others, and they others. Philip will draw Nathaniel, Andrew will draw Peter, and Peter being Converted, will labour to strengthen his brethren: There is a natural instinct in all Creatures to make others like themselves (as Fire will turn all things that come near it, into Fire,) and there is a spiritual instinct in all converted Christians to convert others. It is as natural to a true Christian to make others true Christians, as it is for a Man to beget a Man. True Grace is not only of a Communicative, but of an assimilating nature.*

See then that you labour by seasonable and religious admonitions and exhortations, by communicating of experiences, and especially by the shining pattern of a Holy Life and Conversation, to bring all those with whom you converse unto Jesus Christ. That Man hath not grace in Truth, who puts it in a dark Lanthorn.

12. *Labour to be good in your Relations, good Husbands, and good Wives, good Parents, and good Children, good Masters, and good Servants. Remember that that Man cannot be a good Man, who is not good in his Relation. He cannot be a good Christian, who is not a good Husband, or a good Child, or a good Father, &c. She cannot be a good Christian, who is not a good Wife: And so of the rest: And the reason is, Because the same God who commands the Husband to love God, commands him to love his Wife, the same God who commands the Woman to obey God, commands her to obey her Husband. There is the same stamp of Authority upon our Duties towards our Relations, as upon our Duties towards God; therefore be sure to make Conscience of relative Duties.*

13. *Joyn*

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13. *Joyn works of Mercy and Charity, together with your profession of Piety and Holiness, For God hates a penurious, niggardly, and covetous professor of Religion. Let that saying of David, abide upon your Hearts, God forbid I*

should serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing, God hates your obedience to the first Table, if it be not joyned with obedience to the second. Works of Mercy and Charity are made in Scripture the Touchstones of the Truth of our Piety and Holiness. This is pure Religion (saith the Apostle) and undefiled before God, and the Father, to visit the Fatherless and Widdows in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World. If any Man say (saith St. John) I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a Lyar, for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? An unmerciful, and an uncharitable Man, is a wicked and an ungodly Man. Let it be the care of all those amongst you, who are rich in Estate, to be rich in good works. Let every Man lay up for the poor, according as God hath prospered him, remembering that saying of Christ, Come ye blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, from the Foundation of the World; For I was an Hungred, and ye gave me Meat, I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink, I was a Stranger, and ye took me in, Naked, and ye Cloathed me, I was Sick, and ye Visited me, I was in Prison, and ye came unto me.

2 Sam. 24.

24.

Isa. I. II,

12, 13, 14,

15, 16, 17,

18.

Jam. I. 27.

1 Joh. 4. 20.

1 Cor. 16. 2.

14. *Take heed of separating from the publick Assemblies of the Saints. I have found by experi-*

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ence, that all our Church calamities have sprung from this root. He that separates from the publick Worship, is like a Man tumbling down a Hill, and never leaving till he comes to the bottom of it. I could relate many sad Stories of persons professing godliness, who out of dislike to our Church-meetings, began at first to separate from them, and after many changes and alterations, are turned some of them Anabaptists, some Quakers, some Ranters, some direct Atheists. But I forbear; you must hold Communion with all those Churches, with which Christ holds Communion; you must separate from the sins of Christians, but not from the Ordinances of Christ. Take heed of unchurching the Churches of Christ; lest you prove Schismaticks in stead of being true Christians.

15. Though you never live to see the times settled, yet labour to get your consciences settled: Pray for the Spirit of Truth to guide you into all Truth in these erring Days. Remember that saying of Christ;

If thine eye be evil thy whole Body shall be full of darknes; if therefore the light that is in you be darknes, how great is that darknes. *God hath given you your understandings, to be the guide of the whole Man. As the Eye is the guide of the Body, and the Sun of the World, so is the understanding of the Man; therefore you must in praying, pray that God would give you a right understanding in all things. Pray not only for the Grace of Sanctification, but of Illumination. Avoid as Soul poyson, all Doctrines*

1. Which tend to Liberty, open a Door to Prophaneness, and are contrary to Godliness.

2. Which hold forth a Superstitious strictness above what is required in the Word.

3. Which are Antimagistratical, and Antimistical.

4. Which

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4. Which lift up corrupt Nature, and exalt un-sanctified Reason.

5. Which Preach free Grace, to the utter ruine of good Works.

6. Which lessen the Priviledges of Infants, and makes their condition worse under the New Testament, than under the Old.

7. Which are contrary to the Analogy of Faith, the ten Commandments, and the Lords Prayer.

16. Take heed lest being led away with the error of the wicked, you fall from your own stedfastness. Take heed of a Three fold Apostacy:

Of Apostacy

1. In your Judgments, from the Truths of Christ, and from the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

2. In your Affections, from that ancient love, desire and delight, which the Saints of God have had heretofore, and you your selves once had, in, and towards the Ordinances of Christ, and the godly and learned Ministers of Christ.

3. In your Conversations, from that humble and exact waiking with God in all good Duties, both towards God, and Man. Let me speak to you in the words of the Apostles, Paul and Peter: Wherefore my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable, &c. The God of Grace who hath called you into his eternal Glory by Jesus Christ, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen and settle you.

17. Remember that it is the will of Jesus Christ, that you who partake of the same word of Life, and of the same Sacramental Bread and Wine, should admonish one another, exhort one another, watch over one another, bear the burthens of one another, provoke one another to love and good works, seek the good of one another, and not your

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your own good only ; that you should warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, and support the weak. *That this is your Duty appears, from Col. 3. 16. Phil. 2. 4. Heb. 1. 24. Gal. 6. 1. Rom. 15. 2. Rom. 14. 7. 2 Cor. 5. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 11, 13, 14. The 12. verse speaks of Ministerial and Authoritative Admonition, but the 13 and 14 verses of fraternal and charitative. These Texts will rise up in Judgment against thousands of Christians at the last Day.* I do not say that you are to admonish none but those of your own Society : Admonition is an act of Mercy ; It is spiritual is Eleemosyna, spiritual Alms ; and you are bound by the Royal Law of Charity, by the Communion of Saints, the Communion of Churches, and Communion of Natures, to distribute these spiritual Alms to all that need them, as God shall give occasion. But this I say, you ought speedily to admonish them, and watch over them. *This is novum, though not solum vinculum. Some Divines think, that one chief reason why the Israelites were punished for Achans sin, was, because they did not Admonish him, and watch over him : For the Israelites were commanded in the plural number, Josh. 6. 18. Keep your selves from the accursed thing, &c. He was one of the body, and because they did not watch over him, they communicated in his sin, and in his punishment. There is an excellent Law in this Nation, That every Parish shall provide for its own Poor. And by parity of reason, it is as just and equal, That every Congregation should chiefly and especially look to the Souls of their own members, to warn them, admonish them, exhort them, and watch over them.*

That you may the better discharge this duty, you must labour to be acquainted one with another, as far as your Callings and Relations will give you leave.

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leave. It is a great and common sin, and much to be lamented; That there is so little knowledge and acquaintance, between those that are of the same Congregation: They sit in the same Pew together, partake of the same Sacrament, and yet converse no more together, than if one lived at York, and the other at London: And when they do converse together, it is a meer civil and outward converse, as amongst sober Heathens: But there is very little Religious Society between them, for the spiritual edification one of another. Now this must needs be a great sin; For how can ye watch one another, edify and admonish one another? How can ye support the weak, comfort the feeble-minded, if not spiritually acquainted one with another.

And yet it is not my opinion, that every member of a Congregation is bound to know every Fellow-member. I believe it was not so in the Church of Jerusalem, or of Samaria. It is incredible, to think that they all knew one another. I should be loth to lay such a clog upon your Consciences, as to say, That every Maid-servant, and Man-servant is

bound to know, and to be acquainted with all those with whom they communicate in the Lords Supper. Indeed the Church-Officers are the eyes of the people, and are to know all, and to be acquainted with all. But yet notwithstanding this: I say it is the duty of every Member, to endeavour according to his place and calling, to grow up in spiritual acquaintance one with another, as God shall offer occasion, and not to be so strange and unacquainted, but to walk in love one towards another, to bear one anothers burden, and so fulfil the Law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2.

And this you ought the rather to do, that so you may contribute to the keeping of the Sacrament of the

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the Lords Supper pure in the Congregation to which you belong. *There is much Complaint amongst many (and not without just cause) of mixt Communi- ons, and of an universal liberty, which some take in giving the Sacrament promiscuously to all that come, though grossly ignorant, and notoriously scandalous, and in making (if I may so speak) the Chancel door, as wide as the Church door. This in my judgment is a great iniquity.*

1. *It is to give holy things to Dogs, and to cast Pearlsto Swine. It is a prophanation of the Ordinance, in giving it to those who are visibly unworthy to receive it, and to whom we know Christ would not have us to give it.*

2. *It is an Act of great uncharitableness, to those who are grossly ignorant, and scandalous; for it is to give them that which we know will further their Damnation.*

3. *It makes the Church-Officers (who have power to bind them, and do not use it) partake of other Mens sins.*

4. *It is an Act of cruelty to the Nation: For because we have been Prodigal of Christs Blood, therefore he hath been Prodigal of ours.*

5. *It is a great scandal to the truly godly, and a stumbling block to weak Christians, causing them (though unadvisedly) to separate from our Congregations.*

6. *It is to walk contrary to the practice of most (if not all) of the Churches of Christ in the Christian World.*

To

Dedicatory.

To prevent this Sacrament-prophanation, there are some Ministers, who wholly surcease from administering it: This I allow not, unless in case of absolute necessity; For this is (as it were) to suspend the whole Congregation, and to deny Children their Bread, for fear of giving it to Dogs. The best way is to follow the advice which our Lord Jesus Christ gives Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17. where he propounds Rules and Directions for the removing of scandals out of the Church. If thy Brother shall trespass against thee (saith Christ) go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. He doth not say, Go and separate presently (For this is to rend the Church, not to heal it; this is to hinder thy Brother from Christ, rather than to gain him to Christ:) He doth not say, Go and tell others (for this is to back-bite thy Brother; this is to reproach him, rather than to reprove him) But he saith, Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, &c. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church (that is, to such who are empowered by Christ to redress offences) but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him, &c. Hence learn.

That all Church-reformation, and Sacrament-purity must begin from Church-members, and proceed from them in Christs way unto Church-Officers; That if any man who is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or guilty of any other scandalous Sin, It is your duty, who are members of the same body with him, and know

The Epistle

know his guiltiness, to labour by private admonition to gain him to God, not to shame him by telling others, but to gain him, by telling him alone. But if he will not hear you, then you are in an orderly way, to bring it to the Church, which if you neglect to do, the sin of Church pollution is your sin, and not the sin of your Church-Officers. If there be three doors to get into an house, he that keeps me out of the first, keeps me out of the other two. All Sacrament-reformation begins with you, you are the first door at which it enters; if you fail of your duty, the sin lyeth at your door, not at ours. It is the custom of all people (though otherwise Godly) if a scandalous sinner be admitted to the Lords Supper, to charge the sin of it upon the Minister, and in the meantime to forget that the sin is theirs not his, because they have not done what Christ would have them, for the gaining of him, and for the inabling of the Church, to proceed against him by censures, if he prove obstinate. The Lord give you Hearts to think of this, and give you Grace (instead of murmuring against, and complaining of mixt Communion, and of separating from us because of them) to contribute your utmost towards the purging of our Congregations, and to practise all those duties which Christ requires of you in order thereunto.

I have much more to say of this particular, but I perceive that the Epistle swells to too great a bigness, and therefore I shall defer what I have further to say, till God shall offer me another such opportunity.

18. Labour to maintain Peace and Unity amongst your selves. It is a good and pleasant thing for Bre-

thren

Dedicatory.

thren to dwell together in Unity. Have salt in your selves, and peace Mark 9. 50. one with another. *Labour to get your Souls seasoned with the Grace of Humility, Self-denial, and Mortification; and this will keep you in peace; Remember the saying of Christ, Blessed are the Peace-makers.* Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.

19. *Study often and often the quatuor novissima, the four last things, Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven. The meditation of death will prepare you for Death, The Meditation of Heaven will make you Heavenly-minded: The Meditation of Hell will keep you from Hell: Therefore Bernard persuades us to go often down to Hell by meditation while we live, and we shall not go down to it when we dye. The meditation of the day of Judgment, will be both frænum & calcar, a bridle to curb you from sin, and a spur to incite you to all godliness, that so you may give up your account with joy, at that terrible day.*

20. *Study the exceeding great and precious promises of the Gospel, make a Catalogue of them, meditate on them, and labour to apply them to your own Souls, for your everlasting comfort. And for this purpose, read over these Sermons, and study them in time of health, that you may enjoy the benefit of them in the time of sickness.*

Lastly,

The Epistle, &c.

Lastly, Let me intreat you to praise God in my behalf; that he hath been pleased out of his free love to uphold me amongst you in my Ministerial Employment for these eighteen years; And to continue your earnest Prayers unto him, that he would make my labours more useful and successful, that he would guide me, that I may guide you; that he would not onely make, but keep me faithful in these back-sliding times, and teach me so to Preach, and so to Live, that I may save my self and those that hear me.

Your Servant in the
Work of the Ministry.

Ed. Calamy.

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THE
 Godly Man's
A R K,
 OR,
 City of Refuge
 In the Day of His Distress.

SERMON I.

Psalms 119. 92.

*Unless thy Law had been my delights, I
 should then have perished in mine affliction.*

THIS Psalm (out of which my Text is taken)
 exceeds all the other *Psalms*, not only in
 length, but in excellency, so far (in the
 judgment of *Ambrose*) as the light of the *Sun* ex-
 cels the light of the *Moon*: As the Book of *Psalms*

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is

The Preface to the Text.

is styled by *Luther*, An Epitome of the Bible, or a little Bible: So may this Psalm fitly be called, *An Epitome of the Book of Psalms*. It was written (as is thought) by *David* in the days of his banishment under *Saul*, but so penned, that the words thereof suit the condition of all Saints. It is *penu doctrinae publicum unicuique apta & convenientia distribuens*, a publick store-house of Heavenly Doctrines, distributing fit and convenient instructions to all the people of God, and therefore should be in no less account with those who are spiritually alive, than is the use of the *Sun*, *Air*, and *Fire*, with those who are naturally alive: It is divided into two and twenty Sections, according to the *Hebrew Alphabet*, and therefore fitly called, *A Holy Alphabet for Sions Scholars*; the *A. B. C. of godliness*. *Sixtus Senensis* calls it, *An Alphabetical Poem*. The *Jews* are said to teach it their little Children the first thing they learn, and therein they take a very right course, both in regard of the heavenly matter, and plain stile fitted for all capacities. The chief scope of it, is to set out the glorious excellencies and perfections of the *Law of God*. There is not a verse (except one only, say some learned men in Print, but are therein deceived, but I may truly say, Except the 122. and the 90. verses) in this long Psalm, wherein there is not mention made of the *Law of God*, under the name of *Law*, or *Statutes*, or *Precepts*, or *Testimonies*, or *Commandments*, or *Ordinances*, or *Word*, or *Promises*, or *Ways*, or *Judgments*, or *Name*, or *Righteousness*, or *Truth*, &c.

This Text that I have chosen, sets out the great benefit and comfort, which *David* found in the *Law of God* in the time of his affliction — It kept him from perishing. Had not thy *Law* been my delights, I had perished in my affliction. The

The word *Law* is taken diversly in Scripture, sometimes for the *Moral Law*, *Jam. 2. 10.* Sometimes for the whole *Oeconomy, Polity, and Regiment of Moses*, for the whole *Mosaical dispensation* by Laws partly *Moral*, partly *Judicial*, partly *Ceremonial*, *Gal. 3. 23.* Sometimes for the *five Books of Moses*, *Luke 24. 44.* Sometimes for the whole *Doctrine of God* contained in the *Scriptures of the Old Testament*, *John 7. 49.* By *Law* in this place is meant, all those *Books of the Scripture* which were written when this *Psalm* was penned. But I shall handle it in a larger sense, as it comprehends all the *Books* both of the *Old and New Testament*. For the word *Law* is sometimes also taken for the *Gospel*, as it is *Mic. 4. 2. Isa. 2. 3.* The meaning then is, *unless thy Law*, that is, *Thy Word*, had been my delights, I should have perished in mine affliction.

David speaks this (saith *Musculus*) of the distressed condition he was in when persecuted by *Saul*, forced to fly to the *Philistines*, and sometimes to hide himself in the *Rocks and Caves of the Earth*. *Hic vero simile est, fuisse illi ad manum codicem divina legis, &c.* It is very likely (saith he) that he had the *Book of Gods Law* with him, by the reading of which he mitigated and allayed his sorrows, and kept himself pure from communicating with the *Hearthen* in their superstitions. The *Greek Scholiasts* say, That *David* uttered these words, *A Saule pulsus, & apud Philistaeos & impios homines agere coactus*, when driven from *Saul*, and compelled to live amongst the wicked *Philistines*, &c. for he would have been allured to have communicated with them in their impieties, had he not carried about him the meditation of the *Word of God*. *Unless thy Law had been my delights, &c.*

The Opening of the Text:

In the words themselves, we have two Truths supposed, and one Truth clearly proposed.

1. Two truths supposed.

1. That the Dearest of Gods Saints are subject to many great and tedious Afflictions.
2. That the Word of God is the Saints darling and delight.

One Truth clearly proposed.

That the Law of God delighted in, is the Afflicted Saints Antidote against ruine, and Destruction.

1. Two Truths supposed.

The First is this:

Doct. 1. That the best of Gods Saints are in this Life subject to many great and tedious Afflictions.

David was a man after Gods own Heart, and yet he was a man made up of troubles of all sorts and sizes, insomuch as he professeth of himself, *Psalm 69. 1, 2, 3. Save me O God for the waters are come in unto my Soul, I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods over-flow me; I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried, mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God.* And in this Text he professeth, that his afflictions were so great, that he must necessarily have perished under them, had he not been sustained by the powerful comforts he fetched out of the Word. There is an Emphasis in the word *Then, I should then have perished*; That is, long before this time, then, when I was afflicted, then I should have perished. *Junius and Tremelius translated it, Jam diu periissem, &c.* I should long ago have perished. *Job* was a Man eminent for godliness; and yet as eminent for afflictions. *Nay Jesus Christ himself was a Man of Sorrows, Isa. 53. 3.*

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Insomuch as that it is truly said, *God had one Son without Sin, but no Son without Sorrow.*

This our Dear Sister, at whose Funeral we are met, was a Woman full of many and great Afflictions, which (no doubt) would have quite drowned and swallowed her up, had not the Word of God supported her; therefore it was that she desired, that this Text might be the Subject of her Funeral Sermon.

Quest. But why doth God Afflict his own Children with such variety of long and great afflictions?

Ans. 1. God doth not do this, because he hates them, but because he loves them, For whom the Lord loveth, he Chastiseth, &c. Heb. 12. 6. Did the Lord hate them, he would suffer them to go merrily to Hell. There is no surer sign of Gods reprobating anger, than to suffer a Man to prosper in wicked courses. God threatneth this as the greatest punishment, ~~not to punish them.~~ Hos. 4. 14. And therefore because God loveth his Children, he chastiseth them in this World; that they may not be condemned in the World to come, 1 Cor. 11. 33.

2. God doth not do this, because he would hurt them, but for their good, Jer. 24. 5. The good Figs were sent into Captivity for their good, Heb. 12. 10. He for our profit, &c. God hath very gracious and merciful ends, and aims in afflicting his People. Give me leave here to enlarge my Discourse, and to give you an account of some of these divine aims.

1. Gods Design is to teach us to know him, and to trust in him, and to know our selves. It is a true saying of Luther. *Schola crucis est Schola lucis*, the School of Affliction is a School of Instruction; Gods $\pi\alpha\theta\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$ are $\mu\alpha\theta\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$: His Rods (when Sanctified) are powerful sermons to teach us,

1. To know God: And this is life eternal to know him, John 17. 3. It is said of Manasseh, 2 Chron. 33. 13. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God. Then when he was caught among the Thorns, bound with Fetters, and carryed to Babylon; before that time he knew not the Lord: Afflictions teach us to know God, and not only in his power and greatness, in his anger and hatred against sin, but also in his goodness and mercy: For God doth so sweeten the bitter Cup of Affliction, that a Child of God doth many times taste more of Gods love in one months Affliction, than in many years of prosperity; 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5. 2 Cor. 7. 4. Add to this: Afflictions teach us to know God experimentally and affectionately, not cerebralliter, (as Calvin saith) but cordialiter, so to know him, as to love and fear him, and to fly unto him as our Rock and hiding-place, in the Day of our Distress. It is said, Cant. 3. 1. By Night I sought him, whom my Soul loveth, &c. Some by the word Night, understand the Night of Divine Desertion, and from the words, Gilbertus hath this saying; *Qui querit in nocte, non querit ut videat, sed ut amplectatur*; He that seeks after God in the Night of adversity, doth not seek to see him, and know him formally and superficially; but to embrace him, and to love him really and cordially. And therefore the Church never left till she had found Christ and when she had found him, she held him, and would not let him go, Cant. 3. 2, 3, 4.

2. Not only to know God, but also to trust in him, 12 Cor. 1. 9. We had the Sentence of Death in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God, which raiseth the Dead. Note here, 1. That an Apostle is apt in time of prosperity, to trust in himself. 2. That God brings his Children to the

Gates

Gates of Death, that they might learn not to trust in themselves, but in God which *raiseth the Dead*, that is, from a Dead and Desperate Condition.

3. Not only to know God but to know ourselves, which two are the chief parts of Christian Religion: It is said of the Prodigal, that when he was in Adversity, then he *came to himself*, Luke 15. 17. *And when he came to himself*: He was *spiritually distracted*, when he was in prosperity. Afflictions teach us to know that we are but Men, according to that of David, Psal. 9. 20. *Put them in fear O Lord, that they may know themselves to bee but Men.* Caligula and Domitian, Emperors of Rome, who in prosperity would be called Gods, when it thundered from Heaven were so terrified, that then they knew they were but Men. In prosperity we forget our mortality. Adversity causeth us to know, not only that we are Men, but frail Men, that God hath us *between his Hands*, (as it is Ezek. 21. 17.) and can as easily crush us, as we do moths; That we are in Gods Hands, *as the Clay in the Hands of the Potter*, That he hath an absolute Sovereignty over us, and that we depend upon him for our being, well-being, and eternal-being; these things we know feelingly, and practically in the Day of Affliction: And it much concerns us to know these things, and to know them powerfully; for this will make us stand in awe of God, and study to serve and please him. He that depends upon a Man for his Livelyhood, knowing that he hath him at an Advantage, and can easily undoe him, will certainly endeavour to comply with him, and to obtain his Favour. *The ground of all Service and Obedience is Dependence.* And did we really and experimentally know our dependence

• dance upon God, and the advantages he hath us at, we could not. we would not but comply with him, and labour above all things to gain his love and favour.

2. Gods aim in afflicting his Children, is either to *keep them from sin*, or when they have sinned, to *bring them to repentance for it, and from it.*

1. To *keep them from sin*; This The second made him send an *Angel of Satan* to Design of buffet *Paul*, lest he should be lifted God in af- *up in pride, and exalted above measure,* afflicting his 2 Cor. 12. 7. Children..

2. When they have sinned, to bring them to *repentance for it, and from it.* God brings his Children low, not to *trample* upon them, but to make them low in their own Eyes, and to *humble* them for sin, Deut. 8. 2. God brings them into the deep Waters, not to *Drown* them, but to *wash* and *cleanse* them. Isa. 27. 9. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away sin, &c.* Afflictions (when sanctified) are Divine Hammers to break, and as *Moses* his Rod, to cleave our Rocky Hearts in pieces.

3. They open the Eyes to see sin, *Oculos quos culpa claudit. poena aperit* When the Brethren of *Joseph* were in adversity, then they saw (and not before) the greatness of their sin in selling their Brother, Gen. 42. 21.

They open the Ear to Discipline In prosperity we turn a Deaf Ear to the voice of the Charmer, tho' he charm never so wisely. But adversity openeth the Ear, and causeth us to attend: When God spake upon Mount *Sinai* in a terrible manner, then the people said unto *Moses*: *Speak thou unto us,*

us, all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it, Deut. 5. 27. Memorable is that Text, Jer. 2. 24. *A wild Ass used to the Wilderness, that snuffeth up the Wind at her pleasure, in her occasion who can turn her a way? all they that seek her, will not weary themselves, in her month they shall find her; in her month, that is, when she is great with young, and near her time. A wicked man in the day of his prosperity, is like a Wild Ass used to the Wilderness, he snuffeth at any that shall reprove him, he is of an uncircumcised Ear, and a rebellious Heart; but in his month, that is, when he is big with afflictions, then he will be easily found; this will open his Ear to Discipline.*

3. They will open the mouth to confess sin, Judg. 10. 15.

4. They will command us to depart from iniquity, Job 36. 8, 9, 10.

Afflictions are Gods Furnaces, to purge out the dross of our sins, Gods Files to pare off our spiritual rust, Gods Fanns to winnow out our chaff. In prosperity we gather much soil, but adversity purgeth and purifieth us. This is its proper work, to work out unrighteousness, Dan. 11. 35. Dan. 12. 10.

3. Gods End is not only to keep The third us from sin, but to make us holy and Design.

righteous; therefore it is said, Isa. 26. 9. *When thy Judgments are in the Earth, the Inhabitants of the World will learn Righteousness.* And Heb. 12. 10 *He for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.* As the Waters that drowned the old World, did not hurt the Ark of Noah, but bare it up above the Earth, and as they increased, so the Ark was lifted up nearer and near-

er to Heaven. So Afflictions (when sanctified) do not prejudice the Saints of God, but lift them up nearer unto God in Holiness, and Heavenly-mindedness.

4. Gods Design in afflicting his Children, is to make the World bitter unto them, and Christ sweet. 1. To

imbitter the World: There are two Lambe Legs upon which all Worldly things stand, *uncertainty* and *insufficiency*. All Earthly things are like the Earth, founded upon nothing; they are like *heaps made of Wax*, that quickly melt away. Riches, and Honours, Wife and Children, have *Wings and fly away*; they are like unto *Ab-soloms Mule*, they will fail us when we have most need of them; They may *puff up* the Soul, but they cannot *satisfie it*, *inflare possunt, satiare animam non possunt*: They are all vanity and vexation of Spirit, so saith the Preacher; but most people in time of health, will not believe these things; but when some great sickness betides them, this is as a *real Sermon*, to make out the truth of them; then they see, that a *Velvet slipper* cannot cure the Gout, nor a *Golden Cap* the Head-ach, *Prov. 10. 4*. That riches avail not in the day of wrath; and this imbitters the World.

2. To make Christ sweet and precious. When Christ and his Disciples were in a Ship together, *Mat. 8. 25*. It is said, *That Christ was asleep*; and as long as the Sea was calm, his Disciples suffered him to sleep, but when they were ready to be drowned, then they *awake Christ*; and said, *Master, save us, we perish*. Even the best of Saints when fattened with outward plenty and abundance, are prone to suffer Christ to lye asleep within them, and so neglect the lively actings of faith upon Christ;

Christ; but when the storms of affliction, and outward calamity begin to arise, and they are ready to be over-whelmed with distresses, then None but Christ, none but Christ.

5. Gods design in afflicting his Children, is to prove and improve their Graces.

1. To prove their Graces, Rev. 2. 10. Deut. 8. 2. to prove the truth, and the strength of them.

1. The truth and sincerity of their graces; For this cause he loaded Job with afflictions, to try whether he served God for his Cammels and Oxen, or for love to God. As Salomons Sword tried the true Mother from the false; So the Sword of affliction discovers the sincere Christian from the Hypocrite. Distresses are Divine Touch-stones, to try whether we be true or counterfeit Saints; That Grace is true, which upon trial is found true. 2. To try the strength of our Graces. For it requires a strong Faith to endure great afflictions. That Faith which will suffice for a little affliction, will not suffice for a great one. Peter had Faith enough to come to Christ upon the Sea, but as soon as the storm began to arise, his Faith began to fail, and Christ said: *Why art thou afraid, O thou of little Faith?* Mat. 14. 30, 31. It must be a strong Faith that must keep us from sinking in the day of great distress.

2. To improve our Graces. It is reported of the Lions, that she leaves her young ones, till they have almost killed themselves with roaring and howling, and then at the last gasp, she relieves them, and by this means they become more courageous. So God brings his Children in the deeps, and suffers *Jonah* to be three days and three nights in the Belly of the Whale, and *David* to cry till his Throat was dry, Psalm 39. 3. and suffers his Apostles

Apostles to be all the night in a great storm till the fourth watch, and then he comes and rebukes the Winds, and by this means he mightily increaseth their *patience* and *dependance* upon God, and their Faith in Christ. As the *Palm-tree*, the more it is depressed, the higher, stronger, and fruitfuller it grows; So do the Graces of Gods People.

Lastly, Gods aim in afflicting his People, is to put an edge upon their Prayers, and all their other holy Services.

1. Upon Prayer: What a famous Prayer did *Manasseh* make, when he was under his Iron Fetters. It is thrice mentioned, 2 *Chron.* 33. 13, 18, 19. When *Paul* was struck off his Horse, and struck with blindness, then he prayeth to purpose. Therefore it is said *Acts* 9. 11. Behold he prayeth! In prosperity we pray heavily and drowsily, but adversity adds Wings to our Prayers, *Isa.* 26. 16. The very Heathen Marriners cried aloud to God in a storm. It is an ordinary saying, *Qui nescit orare discat navigare*. There are no Sailors so wicked, but they will pray when in a great storm.

2. Upon Preaching. Prosperity glutteth the Spiritual Appetite, Adversity whetteth it.

3. Upon a Sacrament. How sweet is a Sacrament to a true Saint after a long and great sickness?

1. It makes God and the Word of God precious. If God sets our Cornfields on fire (as *Abshalom* did *Joabs*) then he shall be sure to cause us to come running to him: And how sweet is a Text of Scripture to a Child of God in the hour of his distress?

By all this it appears, that God afflicts his
Child.

Children, not to hurt them, but to help them, and that God hath many glorious and gracious ends and aims in afflicting of them. Therefore it is that David saith of himself in 71 ver. of this Psalm, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes.* He never said, *It is good for me that I have been in prosperity,* but he rather saith the contrary in the 67th verse *Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I have kept thy Word.* Gods people will bless God as much (if not more) in Heaven, for their adversity, than for their prosperity.

Use 1. Let us not pass rash censures upon persons under great Afflictions: Say not, such a Woman is a greater sinner than others, because more afflicted. This was the fault of Jobs friends, and God expresth his anger against them for it, Job 42. 7 *My wrath is kindled against thee, and thy two friends, for you have not spoken the thing that is right, &c.* This was the fault of the Barbarians, Acts 28. 4. *When they saw the venomous Beast hang upon the hand of Paul, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer, &c.* But remember they were Barbarians. It is a sign of a Barbarian, not of a Christian to pass a rash censure upon persons in affliction. Think you (saith Christ) that those eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell and slew them, that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay, but except you repent, ye shall all likewise perish, Luke 13. 4, 5. Think you that they which have the Stone and Gout in extremity, that have Cancers in their Faces and Breasts, are greater sinners than others? I tell you nay, &c. For my part, if I would censure any, it should be such as live wickedly, and meet with no affliction; these have the black brand of

14. *Afflicted Saints not to be censured.*

of reprobation upon them; These are men designed to damnation. *Ambrose* would not tarry a night in the house of a Gentleman that had never in all his life been afflicted, for fear (as he said) lest some great and sudden Judgment should betide it. But when I see a godly Woman afflicted, then I say, this is not so much for her sin, as for her trial: this is not to hurt her, but to teach her to know God, and to know her self, to break her heart for sin, and from sin, to make the World bitter, and Christ sweet. God hath put her into the fire of affliction, to refine her and make her a Vessel fit for his use. God is striking her with the hammer of affliction, that she may be squared, and made ready to be laid in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

Use 2. Here is rich comfort to the Children of God, under the greatest afflictions. For the best of Saints are subject to the worst afflictions: This is the lot of all Gods Children, Christ himself not excepted. Afflictions (indeed) considered in their own nature, are evil things; and so are called, *Amos* 5. 13. They are part of the Curse due to sin, the fruit of Gods revenging wrath; they are as a biting and stinging Serpent; and to a wicked man, remaining wicked, they are the beginning of Hell; *Unsanctified afflictions* perboil a wicked man for Hell and Damnation. But now to a Child of God, they have lost both their name and nature, they are not punishments properly, but chastisements, not *mulctæ*, but *medicæ*; They are not satisfactory, but castigatory. Jesus Christ hath taken away the sting of these Serpents; they are not fiery, but Brazen Serpents, they have a healing, not a hurting power. Christ hath removed the curse and bitterness of them. As the Wood

sweet-

sweetned the *Waters of Marah*, Exod. 15. 25. So Christs Cross hath sweetned the bitterness of afflictions.

There are eight comfortable considerations, to chear the Heart of a Child of God in the day of his distress.

1. God never afflicts his people, but out of pure necessity, 1 Pet. 2. 6. *Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness.* As a most loving Father, never corrects his Child, but when he is forced to it: He willingly provides for his Child, but punisheth him unwillingly. So God freely loadeth with his blessings, but he never chastiseth his Children, but when forced to it; therefore he saith expressly, Lam. 3. 23. *He doth not afflict willingly.* Isa. 27. 1. *Fury is not in me.* It is we that put Thunder-bolts in Gods Hand. If the Sun did not first draw up the vapours from the Earth, there would never be any Thundering, or Lightning. God would never thunder from Heaven with his Judgments, if our sins did not first cry to Heaven for punishment. As Christ whipp'd the sellers of Oxen and Sheep, out of the Temple with a whip made (in all probability) of their own Cords; So God never scourgeth us, but it is with a whip made of our own sins, Prou. 5. 22. Rom. 2. 5. *Thou treasurest up to thy self, &c.* God hath a double treasure, a treasure of mercy, and a treasure of wrath; his treasure of mercy is always full, but his treasure of wrath is empty, till we fill it by our sins: And therefore when God punisheth his Children, he calls it a *strange work*, and a *strange act*, Isa. 28. 21. It is objected of the Bee, that it never stings but when provoked: Sure I am, that God never afflicts his Children but out of pure necessity.

Not

16 *The Afflicted Saints Cordials.*

1. Not only out of pure necessity, but out of true and real love; as I have shewed, Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8.

Object. Do not Divine afflictions proceed out of anger? Was not God angry with Moses for speaking unadvisedly with his Lips? And angry with David for his Adultery, and thereupon afflicted both of them?

Ans. This anger was a fatherly anger rooted in love; It was not *ira qua reprobatur*, but *ira qua purgatur*, It was not *ira hostilis & exterminativa*, but *ira paterna & medicinalis*. As it is a great punishment for God sometimes not to punish, Isa. 1. 5. Hos. 4. 14. So it is a great mercy, sometimes for God to with-draw his mercy.

3. Afflictions are a part of Divine Predestination. That God which hath elected us to salvation, hath also elected us unto afflictions, 1 Thel. 1. 2. That no man should be moved by these afflictions; for you your selves know that we are appointed thereunto. The same love with which God elects us, and bestoweth Christ, and his Spirit upon us, with the very same love he afflicts us.

4. They are part of the gracious Covenant which God hath made with his People, Psal. 89. 31, 32, 33. In which words we have three things considerable.

1. A supposition of sin; If his Children forsake my Law, &c. For sin is always *causa sine qua non*, the cause without which God will never chastise us, and for the most part it is the cause for which he doth chastise us.

2. We have a gracious promise, Then I will visit their transgression with the Rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

3. We have a merciful qualification: Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him,

him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail, my Covenant will I not break, &c. Afflictions are not only mercies, but Covenant mercies; therefore David saith, *Psal. 119. 75.* — *And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* God would be unfaithful, if he did not afflict his Children.

5. Consider that afflictions are part of the Saints blessedness, *Job 5. 17.* Behold! happy is the man whom God correcteth, &c. Behold (saith *Eliphaz*) and we had need behold, and consider it, for there are few that believe it, and yet it is most true; That afflictions (when sanctified) when they are not onely corrections but instructions, then they are evidences that we are in a blessed condition. *Eliphaz* his saying must be interpreted by what *David* saith, *Psal. 94. 12.* Blessed is the Man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy Law: It is not correction simply, but correction joined with instruction, which intitles us to happiness. *Job* even while he was upon the dung-hill, wonders that God should set his heart so much upon him, as to visit him every morning, and to try him every moment, *Job 7. 17, 18.* *Job* upon the Dung hill was happier than *Adam* in Paradise: *Adam* in Paradise was conquered by the Devil; but *Job* upon the Dung hill overcame the Devil. *Lazarus* in his Rags, was happier than *Dives* in his Robes; *Philpot* in his Cole-house, than *Bonner* in his Palace; and godly Mr. *Whitaker* upon his Bed of Pain, than a wicked man upon his Bed of Down. There were many in Christ's time, who would never have known him, or come to him, had it not been for their bodily diseases.

6. Consider the gracious and merciful ends, aims, and designs, that God hath in afflicting his People; what these are, ye have heard already.

7. The

7. The *sweet and precious Promises*, which he hath made to his Children in the day of their adversity, to comfort them, and support them; what these are, you shall hear afterwards.

8. Consider that all *afflictions* shall work at last for the good of *Gods Children*, Rom. 8. 28. Though they are not *bona*, yet they shall be in *bonum*; though they are not good in themselves, yet they shall turn to their good. God beats his Children, as we do our Cloaths in the Sun, only to beat out the *Moths*; God puts them into the fiery Furnace, not to hurt them, but only to *untie the bonds of their sins*: as he dealt with the three Children, Dan. 3. 25. God will either deliver them out of their *afflictions*, or send them to Heaven by them; Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Use 3. If the best of Saints are subject in this life unto many great and tedious *afflictions*, then let us

1. *Expect*
 2. *Prepare for*
 3. *Improve*
- } *Afflictions.*

1. Let us *expect afflictions*; for Christ hath said expressly, John 16. 33. *In the World ye shall have tribulation.* There is in every Child of God;

1. *Sufficiens Fundamentum*, a sufficient foundation for God to build a house of *Correction* upon: There is sin enough to deserve affliction.

2. There is *Sufficiens Motivum*, *Motives* sufficient to prevail with God to chastise them when they sin against him; some of these you have heard already, let me add one more: Because he is more dishonoured by the sins of his own Children, than
by

Gods People are to expect Afflictions. 19

by the fins of wicked Men: As it is a greater Discredit to an *Earthly Father*, when his own Children, than when other Mens Children live wickedly; so it is a greater *Disparagement* to our *Heavenly Father*, when his own Sons and Daughters, than when the Devils Children Transgress his Law: And therefore God will chastise them sooner, surer, and more than others. 1. Sooner, Rom. 2. 9. *Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.* First, the Jew, and then the Gentile. 2. Surer than others. Amos 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the Families of the Earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* 3. More than others, Lam. 4. 6. *The punishment of the iniquity of the Daughter of my People, is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, &c.* Dan. 9. 12. *Under the whole Heaven hath not been done, as hath been done upon Jerusalem.*

3. There is *sufficient necessitas*, sufficient necessity to provoke God to afflict them. It is needful that the Wheat be winnowed, that so the chaffe may be separated from it. It is needful that the wind blow upon the Wheat, to cleanse it, and that Gold be put into the Furnace, to purge and purifie it. When the *Sheep of Christ* are divided one from the other in Judgment, and affections, when separated in *Doctrine, Worship and Discipline*; it is very needful that God should send Afflictions and Distresses, which may be (as the *Shepherds Dog*) very serviceable and instrumental, to unite them together, and to gather them into one *Sheep-fold*. And therefore let the Saints of God expect Afflictions.

2. Let

Gods people are to
prepare for
Afflictions.
1 A stock
of Graces.

2. Let us prepare and provide a-
gainst the Day of Tribulation. Let us
provide,

1. *A stock of Graces.* For sickness is
a time to spend grace, but not to get
grace. A Christian in sickness without
grace, is like a Souldier in War with-
out Armor, like a House in stormy
weather without a Foundation, and

like the Men of the Old World, when ready to
be drowned, without an Ark. Woe be to that
person that hath his graces to get, when he should
use them! And therefore if we would be com-
forted in the Day of Tribulation, we must pro-
vide afore-hand a furniture of graces.

1. *A true Faith* (for a *painted faith* will avail
no more than a *painted Helmet*, or a *painted Ship*)
and not only a *True*, but also a *strong Faith*. A
little faith will faint under great afflictions: when
the winds began to blow fiercely, *Peters* little
Faith began to fail, *Mat. 14. 30.*

2. *A great measure of patience* to inable us to wait
quietly and contentedly, till God come in with
help, for many times he tarrieth till the fourth
watch of the night, as he did *Marth. 14. 25.* And
therefore we have need of patience to keep us
from murmuring or repining.

3. *A great stock of self-denyal, humility, repen-
tance, contempt of the World, and Heavenly-minded-
ness.* He that is furnished with grace in an evil
hour, will be as safe and secure, as *Noah* was in
the Ark, in the time of the deluge, or as those
were, who had sufficiency of Corn in the time of
the seven years Dearth in *Agypt.*

2. *A stock of assurance of Salvation.* For though a Man hath never so much grace, yet if he wants the assurance of it, he cannot receive any comfort by it in the Day of his Distress. *Jacob* was not at all quieted in his spirit, for *Joseph's* being alive, till he came to know of it. And therefore we must not only provide grace, but the assurance of grace, that we may be able to say with confidence, as *Job* did upon the Dunghill, *Job. 19. 25. I know that my Redeemer liveth*; and with the Holy Apostle, *Rom. 8. 38. I am persuaded, that neither Death nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* That Man who hath got a Scripture assurance of his Salvation, will be more than a Conquerour in the Day of his Distress.

3. *A stock of Divine Experiences.* Happy is that Man that lodgeth up in his Heart all the former Experiences he hath had of Gods love and mercy towards him, and knoweth how to argue from them in the day of Calamity: Thus did *Moses* in his Prayer to God, *Numb. 14. 19. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt, even until now.* Because God had forgiven them, therefore *Moses* entreats him to forgive them; this Argument is drawn from former experience. And thus *David* encourageth himself, *1 Sam. 17. 37. The Lord hath delivered me out of the Paw of the Lion, and out of the Paw of the Bear, and* he

22 They are to prepare for Afflictions.

he will deliver me out of the Hand of this Philistine. Thus also Paul reasoneth, 2 Cor. i. 10. *Who delivered us from so great a Death, and doth deliver, and in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.* Divine experiences are the Saints great encouragements in the Day of Affliction. Blessed is the Man that hath his Quiver full of these Arrows.

4. **A stock of Sermons.** We must do with Sermons as the Tradesmen do with the Money they get; some of it they lay out for their present use, and some of it they lay up a-

gainst the time of Sicknes. That Man is an ill Husband and an unthrifty Tradesman, that makes no provision for Old Age, or for an evil Day; and that Man is an unprofitable hearer of the word, who doth not stock and store himself with Sermons, whereby he may be comforted in the hour of affliction. And therefore the Prophet *Isiah* adviseth us, *Isa. 42. 23. To hear for the time to come, or (as it is in the Hebrew) for the after time.* Sermons are not only to be heard for our present use, but to be laid up for after-times, that when we lye upon our Sick-beds, and cannot hear Sermons, we may then live upon the Sermons we have heard.

5. **A stock of Scripture-Promises.** And lastly, we must prepare and provide a stock of Scripture-Promises, which will be as so many reviving Cordials, to chear us, and as so many Spiritual Anchors, to uphold us from perishing in the Day of our Tribulation. What these Promises are, you shall hear afterwards: These upheld David in the hour of his Distress, and therefore he saith in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my Delight, I had Perished in mine*

mine Affliction. If this our Dear Sister had not had this Stock, she had been quite *overwhelmed* under the grievousness of her Tormenting Pains. Be wise therefore, O ye Saints of God, and prepare these five provisions in the time of Health, that so ye may live joyfully in the time of sickness.

3. As we must expect and provide for afflictions, so also we must labour (when afflicted) to improve them for our Spiritual benefit and advantage. We must pray more for the Sanctification of them, than for their removal: It was not the Staff of *Elisha*, that revived the dead Child, but *Elisha* himself. It was not the troubling of the waters of the Pool of *Bethesda*, that made them healing, but the coming down of the Angel; It was not the Clay and Spittle that cored the blind eyes, but *Christs* anointing them with it; It was not the Cloak of *Elijah*, that divided the Waters, but the God of *Elijah*: Troubles, Stroaks, Blows, Afflictions, and Distresses will do us no good, unless the Lord be pleased to make them effectual: And therefore let us pray unto God, that he would give us grace together with our Afflictions, That he would add *Instruction* to his *Correction*: that he would make us good Scholars in the School of Afflictions, and enable us to take out all those excellent lessons, which he would have us to learn in it, that thereby we may come to know God more powerfully and experimentally, and to know our selves, and our own frailty, and our absolute dependance upon God more effectually, that thereby we may be more purified and refined, that the wind of Temptation may cleanse us from the Chaff of our Corruption, that

we

3 Gods
People are
to im-
prove af-
flictions.

we may learn Righteousness by Gods Judgments, and be made partakers of his Holiness. Such a good Scholar was *Manasseh*, he got more good by his *Iron Chain*, than by his *Golden Chain*. Such another was the *Prodigal Child*, who was happier among the *Swine*, than when in his *Fathers House*. Such was *Paul*, his being stricken down to the ground, raised him up to Heaven; by the blindness of his body, his Soul received sight; and he was turned from a persecuting *Saul*, to a persecuted *Paul*. Such another was *David*, who professeth of himself, *That it was good for him that he was Afflicted*; and such Scholars ought we to be.

There are some that are arrant Dunces in this School, that are like unto the *Bush* which *Moses* saw, which burned with Fire, but was not Consumed, the fire did not consume the *Thorny Bush*. Many such *Thorny Sinners* are burnt up with the fire of Divine Afflictions, but their sins are not consumed. Of these the Prophets complain, *Amos 4. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.* ——— *Yet they have not returned, &c. Jer. 5. 3. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction; they have made their faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return.* Rocks and Stones by hewing and polishing, may be made fit for a Building: But there are some Men, who by no Afflictions will be amended. *The Mountains melt at the presence of the Lord, and the Rocks rend asunder, when he is angry:* But there are some that have made their Faces harder than the Rocks and the Mountains, and are not at all affected with Gods anger. Of such as these *Bernard* complains, *Multi humilitati, pauci humiles, corripimur, sed non corrigimur, plestimur, sed*

sed non fle&imur; Multo facilius frangeris quam flexeris. Non cessant vitia civium usque ad excidia civitatum; Prius est interire quam corrigi. Prius ipsos, quam in ipsis vitia non esse.

There are others that are the worse for their Afflictions, like the Smiths Anvil, the more they are stricken, the harder they are: Such a one was King Ahaꝝ, 2 Chron. 28. 22. *In the time of his Distress he did Trespas yet more against the Lord:* There is a brand put upon him — This is that King Ahaꝝ, that wicked King Ahaꝝ, that Reprobate King Ahaꝝ. As Pearls put in Vinegar, lose their Colour and Beauty, so many, when under Gods Hand, lose all their Glory and excellency, and beginto distrust Gods Providence, to call his justice into question, to murmur and repine against Gods dealings, and to use unlawful means for their deliverance. Of these the Prophet Isaiah complains, Isa. 1. 5. *Why should you be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more:* Such was Ahaꝝ, 2 Kings 1. 2. that sought for help from Baalzebub the God of Ekron; and such was Saul, who sought to the Witch of Endor for health in the day of his distress.

Both of these sorts are in a sad and miserable condition: For God hath two Furnaces, the Furnace of Affliction, and the Furnace of Hell-fire. If the first Furnace will not purge us, the second will everlastingly consume us. As the Roman Consuls had a Man appointed to go before them, carrying a Rod and an Axe; a Rod for the punishing of Corrigible Offenders, an Axe for the destruction of incorrigible; So God hath his Rod, and his Axe, his Pruning-Knife, and his Chopping-Knife, his Warning-pieces, and his Murdering-pieces. Afflictions are his Rods to correct us for our sin, his Pruning-Knife

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nace of Affliction, and the Furnace of Hell-fire. If
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everlaſtingly conſume us. As the Roman Conſuls
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C Kniſe

Knife to pare off our luxuriant branches; his *Warning-Pieces* to call upon us to repent.

But if his *Warning-Pieces* will do us no good, we must expect his *Murdering-Pieces*. If his *Pruning-Knife* will not amend us, his *Chopping-Knife* will confound us. If his *Rods* will not reclaim us, then his *Axe* will hew us down, and cast us into everlasting fire. God hath three Houses, the *House of Instruction*, of *Correction*, and of *Destruction*. The place where Gods people meet to hear his Word, is his *House of Instruction*; and if we profit in this House, he will never carry us unto the *House of Correction*: But if we be stubborn and rebellious in the *House of Instruction*, then he will send us to the *House of Correction*; and if we profit in this House, he will never send us into the *House of Destruction*: But if we continue incorrigible in the *House of Correction*, he will inevitably send us to the *House of Destruction*, that is, unto Hell fire.

And therefore, whensoever God brings us into the *School of Affliction*, let us labour to be good Scholars in it, and to answer all those ends, aims and designs, which God hath in afflicting of us. Let us pray to God that our afflictions may be Divine Hammers to break our Hearts for sin, and from sin, may make the *World bitter*, and *Christ more precious*, may prove and improve our graces, and may put an edge upon all Holy Duties.

There are two things, I would have you in an especial manner to labour after:

1. Labour when afflicted, to know the meaning of Gods Rod.
2. That the good you get by afflictions, may abide upon you after your recovery from them.

1. You

1. You must labour to know the meaning of Gods Rod, and what the particular errand is which he hath to you in the day of your distresses; you must do as *David* did, 2 Sam. 21. 1. He enquired of the Lord, to know the reason why he sent a Famine amongst them. So must you, you must pray as *Job* doth, *Job* 10. 2. Shew me, O Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me? When the cause of a disease is found out, it is half cured. Your great care therefore must be to study to know the particular cause and reason, why God turns your prosperity into adversity. The Prophet *Micah* tells us, *Micah* 6. 9. That the Rod hath a voice, and that the man of Wisdom shall see Gods Name upon it. There is a great measure of Spiritual Art and Wisdom required to enable a man to hear this voice, and to understand the language of it. A spiritual Fool cannot do it.

Quest. What must we do, that we may understand the voice of the Rod?

Ans. You must know that the Rod of God ordinarily speaks three languages; it is sent for correction for Sin, for the trial and exercise of Grace, and for instruction in Holiness: Sometimes indeed it is sent only for trial and instruction, and not at all for sin.

Upon this account was *Job* afflicted, and the blind man, *John* 9. 3. But for the most part it hath a three-fold voice: it is appointed for instruction, probation and also for correction, *Lam.* 3. 39. *Isa.* 42. 24. *Luke* 1. 20. 1 *Cor.* 11. 30.

Quest. How shall a man know whether his afflictions be only for trial and instruction, and not at all for sin?

C 2

Ans.

Gods People are to labour to know the meaning of Gods Rod.

How we may know the meaning of Gods Rod.

28 How to know Gods aim in afflictions.

Ans. The safest and best way for a Christian in this case, is to believe that all his afflictions are both for *trial* and *instruction*, and also for *sin*. Indeed when he seeth another man, who is very Godly, grievously diseased, he may charitably believe, that this is for his trial, and not for his sin; but when it is his own case, then (as D. Ames saith most excellently) *Æquissimum, tutissimum, & Deo gratissimum est, ut in afflictionibus omnibus peccata nostra intueamur, quæ illas vel directe procurarunt, vel saltem promeruerunt. Quamvis enim omnes afflictiones non immitantur semper directe & perpetue propter peccatum, peccatum tamen est omnium afflictionum fons & fundamentum, Rom. 5. 12.* ---- "It is
"most equal, most safe, and most acceptable to
"God, to have an eye upon our sins, which have
"either directly procured them, or at least deser-
"ved them. For though afflictions are not al-
"ways sent directly and especially for sin, yet sin
"is the Original and Foundation of all af-
"flictions.

Quest. What course must we take to find out what that sin is in particular for which God corrects us?

Ans. 1. Sometimes we may read
How to find our sin in our punishment. Adoni-
out the par- bezek, though a Heathen King, did
ticular sin this, Judges 1. 7. Threescore and ten
for which Kings, having their Thumbs, and
God afflicts their great Toes cut off, gathered their
us. meat under my Table; as I have done,
so God hath required me. I read of
holy Ephraim, that he was converted by the suit-
ableness of his affliction, unto the sin he had com-
mitted, for he saw clearly that his misery came
not by chance, but from God immediately, and
for sin. As a Man may sometime gather the
disease

disease of the Patient. by observing the Physicians Bill; so he may guess at his sin, by considering his punishment.

2. Consider what *that sin* is for which thy Conscience doth most of all accuse thee. Conscience is Gods Vicegerent, his bottom Preacher. And when we slight the voice of Conscience, God seconds it with the voice of his Rod, which speaks the very same language that Conscience doth.

3. Consider what is the sin of thy *Complexion*, and *Constitution*, what is thy *Dilectum delictum*, thy *peccatum in deliciis*, thy beloved sin, what is that sin to which thou art most of all inclined, and if that sin prevail over thee, and thou canst not say with David, Psal. 18. 23. *I have kept my self from mine iniquity*; it is very probable that for the subduing of that sin, thou art corrected of God.

4. If ever thou hast been at the Gates of Death, despairing of Life, consider what that sin was, which did then most of all trouble and perplex thy Conscience; or if ever thou hast been in a Dream, supposing thy self to be dying, and breathing out thy last; what was that sin which did then most of all affright thee: It is very likely that God by afflicting thee, intends to get that sin more conquered and mortified.

5. Consider what those sins are for which thy godly Minister (under whose care thou livest) doth reprove thee, and of which thy *true* and *real* friends do accuse thee; for, if thou hast slighted the voice of thy faithful Minister, and Friends, urely God out of his love to thee, followeth their advice with the Voice of his Rod, that thereby he may open thine Ear to Discipline, and command thee to depart from those iniquities.

But if thou canst not find out that *particular sin*,
C 3 every

30 *How to know Gods aim in afflictions.*

for which God afflicts thee, labour to repent of every sin, and then thou wilt be sure to repent of that sin. If thou canst not find out the *Bee* that stings thee, pull down the whole *Hive*, or the *Thorn* that pricks thee, pull down the whole *Hedge*. Do that out of wisdom, which *Herod* did out of malice, who because he could not find out the *Babe Jesus*, killed all the Children in Bethlehem from two years old, and under, that so he might be sure to kill *Jesus*. Let us seek the utter ruine and death of all our sins, and then we shall be sure to destroy that sin for which God afflicts us; and when the cause is removed, the disease will forthwith be cured, and the Almighty pacified, and reconciled unto us.

2. Let us labour that the good we reap by our afflictions, may abide upon us after our recovery from them. There are very many who while they are under the Rod, seem to be very penitent, and do purpose and promise to amend their lives, but as soon as the Rod is removed, they return like the Dog to the vomit, &c. Such was *Pharaoh*, whilst he was plagued he confessed his sin, and prayed for pardon, but as soon as ever the Judgment was gone, he hardened his Heart. Such were the *Israelites*, *Psal.* 78. 34, 35, 36, 37. *They were not stedfast, they turned back.* Just like a truantly Schoolboy, who while his Master is whipping him, will promise any thing, but when it is done, forgets presently to do what he promised: Or like unto *Water*, which while it is upon the fire is very hot, but as soon as ever it is taken off the fire, presently groweth cold. I knew a Man who in the time of his sickness was so terrified

How to get abiding good by Afflictions. 31.

fied in his Conscience for his sins. that he made the very Bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long. *I am damned, I am damned,* and made many and great Protestations of amendment of life. if God would be pleased to recover him: In a little while he did recover, and being recovered, was as bad, and as wicked as ever before.

And therefore let us labour that the good we get by our afflictions, may not vanish away with our afflictions, but may abide on us after we are recovered, that we may be able to say with David, *It is good for me, that I was afflicted*; not only that *I am*, but that *I was*; David praiseth God in health for the good he had got in sickness, and which still abode with him. Let us say with the same Prophet, *Psal. 66. 13, 14 I will go in to thy House with Burnt Offerings, I will pay thee my Vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.* Let us pray unto God that his afflictions may not onely skin over our spiritual diseases, and coup up our sins, but mortifie them, and so change our natures, that we may never return to folly.

I will conclude this point with a famous saying of *Plinius secundus*, worthy to be written in Letters of Gold. A friend writes to him, and intreats him to give advice how to frame his life, so as he might live as becomes a good man: He returns him this answer; *I will not prescribe many Rules, there is this one onely which I commend to thee above all other. Ut tales esse perseveremus sani, quales nos futuros profitemur infirmi.* Let us labour to continue and persevere to be such, when we are well, as we purpose and promise to our selves to be, when we are sick.

32 *How to get abiding good by Afflictions.*

There is hardly any man so wicked, but he will in sickness make many and great Promises of a new life, and of universal reformation, if God would restore him. Now then, if we not only be such, but continue to be such when restored, as we promise to be when sick, then we shall be excellent *Scholars* in the School of affliction, and God will either (as I have already said) deliver us out of affliction, or send us to Heaven by affliction. So much for the first truth supposed.

The End of the First Sermon.

THE

THE
WORD of GOD
IS THE
Saints Delight.

SERMON II.

PSAL. 119.92.

*Unless thy Law had been my Delights, I
should then have perished in mine Af-
fliction.*

NOW I come to speak of the second Truth
supposed in the Text.

*That the Word of God is the Saints Darling and
Delights; Not only their Delight, but in the plural
number, their Delights; that is (as our Annota-
tions say) a Saint doth greatly delight in Gods
Law, or as Junius, all the delight of a Saint, is in*

C 5

Gods

Gods Law ; Gods Word is the Center of his Delights, *Nisi lex tua erat omnis oblectatio mea* ; Many were the troubles and sorrows of Davids life, but against them all he found as many comforts and delectations in Gods Word, therefore he saith, verse 29. *Thy Testimonies are my Delights, &c.* and 143. *Trouble and Anguish have taken hold on me, yet thy Commandments are my Delights* : And in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my Delights, &c.* Whilst others delight in Vanity and Iniquity, whilst others take pleasure in Hunting, Hawking, Carding, Dicing, Eating and Drinking, the Saints of God can say with Austin, *Sacra Scripturae tuae sunt sanctae deliciae meae*, *Thy Holy Scriptures are my Holy Delights.*

Quest. *Why do the Saints of God take such delight in the Law of God ?*
Ans. 1. Because they are spiritually inlightned ; their eyes are opened to behold the glory and beauty, and to understand the deep mysteries of the Law ; therefore David prayeth, verse 18. *Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy*

Law. As the Apostle saith of the Jews, 2 Cor. 3. 14, 15, 18. *That to this day there is a vail over their Hearts, when Moses is read, and when they shall turn to the Lord, this vail shall be removed* : So it is with Christians, when a wicked Man reads the Word, there is a vail over his eyes, and over his heart, and over the Scriptures, *The God of this World hath so blinded his eyes, that he cannot behold the beauty and glory of them* ; but the true Saint hath this vail removed : Christ hath anointed his eyes with *Spiritual Eye-salve* ; he seeth a surpassing excellency in the Word of God, and therefore cannot but delight in it.

2. Be-

2. Because they are not only *enlightned*, but *re-generated*; And as Children New-born by the Instinct of nature, have a natural appetite to Milk for Conservation of their Life; So the New-born Saint, by the instinct of grace, hath a spiritual appetite to the Word of God; according to that of Saint Peter, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *As New-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby.* The Word of God is the Saints food, and as it is impossible for a Child unborn to desire food, so for a Man unregenerated to hunger after, and take true pleasure in the Word; and as it is impossible for a New-born Child, not to delight in Milk, so it is as impossible for a regenerate Christian, not to delight in the Law of God.

3. Because a true Saint hath the Law of God *written in his Heart*, according to that precious Promise of the Covenant of Grace, Jer. 31. 33. *I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their Hearts.* A Saints Heart is the counterpain to Gods Law. The Law is within his Heart, Psal. 40. 8. and as it is in the Hebrew, in the midst of his Bowels *medio viscerum*. God hath infused a principal of Grace into his inward parts, whereby he is not only inclined, but inabled to walk in all the Commandments of the Law, blameless. A true Saint hides the Law in his Heart, as a *choice Jewel* in a most precious Cabinet, as David saith, Verle 9. *I have hid thy Law in my Heart*, Hid it as a rare Treasure. So doth every Saint, and therefore cannot but delight in it.

4. Because the same *Holy Spirit*, that wrote the word, *dwelleth in every true Saint*. It is certain that all Scripture is of *Divine inspiration*, and that the *Holy Men of God* spake as they were guided by the *Holy Ghost*. And it is as certain, That the same *Holy Ghost*

Ghost dwelleth in every Saint, *Rom. 8. 11.* And by vertue of the in dwelling of the Spirit, they are sweetly and powerfully drawn to make the Law of God their chiefeſt delight.

5. Because it is *Gods Inditement, and Invention.* This Reason is brought in the Text, *Unless thy Law, &c.* It is the Law of that God in whom they delight. It transcribes the mind and heart of God. A true Saint seeth the *Name, Authority, Power, Wisdom and Goodness* of God in every letter of it, and therefore cannot but take pleasure in it. It is an Epistle sent down to him from the God of Heaven. It is one of the greatest *Love-tokens* that ever God gave to his Church. There are two great Gifts that God hath given to his people. The *Word Christ,* and the *Word of Christ*: Both are unspeakably great; but the first will do us no good without the second.

6. A true Saint cannot but delight in the Word of God, because it is his *inheritance*, *vers. 111.* *Thy Testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoycing of my Heart.* Therefore they were the rejoycing of his Heart, because they were his everlasting Inheritance.

7. Because he finds a *sweetness in it.* Delight is nothing else but a passion of the Soul, arising from the sweetness of the object that we enjoy. Things that are good, present suitable, and sweet, are the object of our delights; such is the Word of God to every true Saint; it is *sweeter than the Honey and the Hony-comb*, *Psal. 19. 10.* So also *Psal. 119. 103.* *How sweet are thy words unto my tast, yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth* A Saint must needs delight in it, it is so suitable, and so sweet.

8. Because he loves the Law. Now that which

we love, we cannot but delight in, when we come to enjoy it. A true Saint doth not only love the Law, but he loves it exceedingly, *Psal. 119. 167. My Soul hath kept thy Testimonies; and I love them exceedingly.* A true Saint can say with David, *Plal. 119. 97. O how do I love thy Law!* And ver. 27. *I love thy Commandments above gold, yea, above fine Gold:* And verse 72. *The Law of thy Mouth is better to me than thousands of Gold and Silver.* Now because the Saints of God are so inamoured with the Law of God, therefore it is, that they cannot but delight in it, as David saith, *Psal. 119. 47. I will delight my self in thy Commandments, which I have loved.* He that loves the Commandments (as all Saints do) cannot but delight in them.

Use. This shews that there are but few true Saints amongst us. There are many bastard Saints, and nominal Saints, but few true and real Saints. We live in an Age wherein there were never more Saints, and never fewer, never more by outward Profession, and never fewer by a Holy Conversation. It is the property of a true Saint to make the Word of God his Darling and Delights.

But where shall we find such Saints? It is easie to find out Men that can say, *Eating and Drinking is my Delight, Carding and Dicing is my Delight, Reading of vain and trifling Books is my Delight, to satisfy the Lusts of the Flesh is my Delight.* But where is the Man that can truly say as David saith? *The Law of God is my Delights, and the joy and rejoycing of my Heart for ever.* Austin professeth of himself, that before his Conversion, he took no pleasure in the Word of God: His proud Heart (as he saith) would not stoop to the humble expressions of it. After his Conversion, he was ravished with the beauty and excellency of the Scriptures, but

but before his Conversion, he saw no excellency in them. *Politian* (though a great Scholar, yet a notorious Atheist) professeth most Blasphemously, that he never lost more time, than in reading the Scripture. And it is reported of *Plato*, that when he had read the first Chapter of *Genesis*, he said: *Hic vir multa dicit, sed nihil probat*: This Man saith many things, but proveth nothing. Where shall we find the Man that puts a due estimation upon the Word of God? That prizeth it above Gold, yea, above much fine Gold? That rejoiceth in thy word, as much as in all riches, verse 14. That can appeal to God, and say as *David*, verse 159. *Consider, O Lord, how I love thy Precepts*; and verse 97. *Oh how do I love thy Law*; There are some Men that can delight in any thing, but in God and his Word, and in his Ordinances: They can delight in the Creatures of God, but cannot delight in the Ordinances of God. They can delight in the Gifts of God, in Riches, and Health, and Honours: But they cannot delight in the God of these Gifts. They can delight in Books of Philosophy, and Humanity, but they cannot delight in the Word of God.

Mark the sad condition that these are in.

It is a certain sign that there is a vail over their Eyes and Hearts, that they are not yet anointed with Christs *Eye-Salve*, that the God of the World hath blinded their Eyes, that they cannot see the glorious excellencies of the Law of God.

It is certain, that they are not *Born anew*, for if they were new born Babes, they would desire the sincere Milk of the Word.

It is certain that the *Law of God* is not yet written in their Hearts; and that the *Spirit of God* doth not dwell in them. It is certain, that they have

no part, nor portion in the Word of God, that they never tasted the sweetness that is in it, and that they have no true love to God, nor to his Word. It is a true saying, *Qui Regem amat, Legem amat*, he that loves a King, will love his Law. And I may say, *Qui Deum amat, Legem Dei amat*: He that loves God, will love the Law of God, which is nothing else but his Image, and his Picture, his last Will and Testament, his blessed Love-token: And therefore if you delight not in the Law of God, it is evident you do not delight in the God of this Law. And if you delight not in God, he will not delight in you; unless it be to laugh at your Destruction, as it is Prov. 1. 26.

Quest. But how shall I know whether I do delight in the Word of God, or no?

Ans. You shall know it by these notes.

1. He that delights in Gods Law, will be very frequent in *Meditating* and *Reading* of it, and very often in *speaking* of it. Thus saith David, Psal. 1. 2. *His Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and therein he will Meditate Day and Night.* And Psal. 119. 97. *Oh how do I love thy Law, it is my Meditation all the Day.* So also, verse 15, 16, 23. He that takes pleasure in the Law, he will be often thinking of it, as Christ saith, Matth. 6. 21. *Where the Treasure is, there the Heart will be also:* If the Word of God be thy Treasure, thou wilt meditate on it *Cogitatione crebra, longa & profunda.* Thou wilt frequently think of it; and when thou beginnest to think of it, thou wilt dwell upon the thought of it, as a Bee dwells (as it were) upon the flower, to suck out the sweetness that is in it and thou wilt think of it with deep and serious meditations and contemplations, thou wilt *Dive* into the unsearchable Riches and Treasures that are in the Word

Word. And as thou wilt meditate on it, so thou wilt be often, and unwearisome in reading and perusing of it, and discoursing about it. A Man that delights in Hunting, is never weary of talking of Hunting; and he that delights in the world, of speaking about the world; and if you delight in Gods Word, you would be very frequent, and inderatigable in discoursing of it.

2. If you delight in the *Word of God*, you would delight in the *Ministers*, and *Ambassadors* of the Word, lawfully commissioned by Christ: For the great work of the Ministry is to expound and apply the Word: And therefore if you disrespect the Godly, Learned, Lawful Ministry of the Word, you take no delight in the Word.

3. They that delight in the Word, will be at any cost to bring the Word to their Congregations, they will part with thousands of Gold and Silver, rather than with the Word; *He that esteems the Word above thousands, will be willing to part with hundreds for the Words sake*: He will account a famine of the Word more bitter than a Famine of Bread; by how much the Soul is better than the Body, by so much will he be more troubled for a Soul-famine, than a bodily.

4. He that delights truly in the Law, will sincerely labour to obey it, and be much grieved when it is disobeyed.

1. He will sincerely labour to obey it, he will make the Word of God, the Man of his Counsel, verse 24. *Thy Testimonies are my delight*, but how doth he prove that? in the following words, and *my Counsellors*: He will make the Word a *Lamp to his Feet*, and a *Light to his Paths*, verse 105. In all his undertakings, he will enquire what God would have him to do, and he will make Gods Word his Com-

Compass to Sail by, and pray with David, verse 35. *Make me to go in the Path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight.*

2. He will be much grieved when others transgress the Law of God. Thus David, verse 53. *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy Law.* And verse 136. *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.*

And therefore you that delight in sin, you cannot be said to delight in the Word; and you that are not pained and grieved when others sin, you are not amongst the number of those that take pleasure in Gods Law, or in whom God takes pleasure.

Use 2. Let us make it appear, that we are *Saints in deed, and in truth*, not only Saints in *Mans*, but in *Gods Kalendar*, by following the example of Holy David, set down in the Text. Let us make the Law of God our joys, and our delights. Let me speak to you in the words of the Apostle, *Col. 3. 16. Let the Word of God dwell richly in you; &c. not only with you, but in you.* And in the words of Christ, *John 5. 39. Search the Scriptures, for therein you hope to find eternal Life.* The Greek word signifieth to search as Men do under ground for Treasures, or to search as Men who dive under water for something that is at the bottom. Let us with *Job, 23. 12. Esteem the Word of God above our necessary Food.* Let us love it above Gold, yea, above *fine Gold*; Let it be dearer to us, than thousands of *Gold and Silver*, sweeter than the *Honey and the Honey-comb.*

You that are Gentlemen, remember what Hierom reports of *Nepotianus*, a young Gentleman of Rome, *Qui longa & assidua meditatione scripturarum*

rarum, pectus suum fecerat bibliothecam Christi, who by often and assiduous meditation of the Scriptures, made his Breast the Library of Christ. Remember what is said of King *Alphonfus*, that he read over the Bible fourteen times, together with such Commentaries as those times afforded.

You that are Scholars, remember *Crammer* and *Ridley*, the former learnt the New Testament by Heart in his journey to Rome, the latter, in *Pembroke-Hall* Walks in Cambridge. Remember what is said of *Thomas-a-Kempis*, that he found rest nowhere, *nisi in angulo, cum libello*; but in a corner with this Book in his hand. And what is said of *Beza*, that when he was above fourscore years old, he could say perfectly by heart any Greek Chapter in *Pauls* Epistles.

You that are Women, consider what *Hierom* saith of *Paula*, *Eustochiam*, and other Ladies, who were singularly versed in the holy Scriptures.

Let all men consider that hyperbolical speech of *Luther*, That he would not live in Paradise without the Word, and with it, he could live well enough in Hell. This speech of *Luther*, must be understood, *Cum grano salis*.

Quest. May not a wicked man delight in the Word of God? Is it not said of *Herod*, Mark 6. 20. That he heard *John Baptist* gladly; and of the stony ground, Luke 8. 13. That it received the Word with joy? Is it not said of the *Israelites* remaining wicked, that they delighted to know Gods ways, and took delight in approaching to God, *Isa.* 58. 2. and of the *Jews*, *John* 5. 35. That they were willing for a season to rejoice in the Light, held forth by the preaching of *John Baptist*?

Ans. There is a wide and vast difference between the joy and delight which a true Saint takes in

in Gods Word, and that which may be found in an Hypocrite.

1. The delight of a godly man, is *orderly and seasonable*; it is the consequent of conviction and humiliation: For though Joy be the great work of the Spirit, yet it is not the first work. First, The Spirit by the Word convinceth and humbleth, and then comforteth: therefore Christ saith, *Mat. 5. 4. Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted*, and David saith, *Psal. 126. 5. They that Sow in Tears, shall Reap in Joy*. But the joy of an Hypocrite is *unseasonable and disorderly*; It is his first work. It is said of the stony ground, that when they heard the word, they received it immediately with gladness, *Mark 4. 16*. It is not said, they received it first with sorrow, and then with gladness. Here is mention of joy, without any antecedent humiliation. Nay the Text saith expressly, *Luke 8. 6. It lacked moisture, and therefore it withered away*. There are many Professors in our days, that skip from sin to joy at first, that all in an instant are in the highest form of sin, and in the highest form of comfort, that skip out of the Lap of the Devil, into the Lap of Joy: These are as the stony ground. These are wanton Christians; they Sow before they Plow; they know not the bitterness of sin, and therefore in time of temptation fall away.

2. The delight that a godly man takes in the Word, is a well-rooted delight. It is rooted in an *humble, good, and honest heart*; as is said of the good ground, *Luke 8. 15*. But the delight of an Hypocrite is *shallow and superficial*; as his Graces are sleight and formal, so are his delights. Therefore it is said of the Seed that fell upon the stony ground, that it had no root, *Luke 8. 13. and Mat. 13. 5. It wanted depth of Earth, and therefore when the*

44 *The Saints Delight in the Word,*

the Sun arose it was scorched. The Apostle hints this, *Heb. 6. 4.* — and have tasted the good Word of God. The delight of a wicked man in the Word, is but a *tasting and sipping*, no *soaking*, a floating aloft in the River of Christs blood, no diving down to the bottom. A man may taste a thing, and not like it; taste, and *like it*, and yet not come up to the price of it, as the *young man* *Mat. 19. 22.* He was very desirous to enjoy eternal life, but he would not part with his possessions for the obtaining of it. A Cook tasteth of the meat he dresseth, but they only that are invited eat of it.

Tasting doth not imply *habitual Grace*. A man may taste that which he never digesteth, nor concocteth. The *Israelites* tasted of the first fruits of the Land of *Canaan*, And yet did not enter into *Canaan*. Such is the joy of the Hypocrite: It is *outward and superficial*; but the delight of a true Saint, is *inward, solid, and substantial*. *Jeremiah* saith, that the Word of God was the *joy and rejoicing of his heart*, and that he did eat it, *Jer. 15. 16.* he did not onely taste it, but eat it. And *Paul* saith, *Rom. 7. 22.* *I delight in the Law of God after the inner man*: His delights had depth of Earth, they were well digested and concocted.

3. It is *superlative and over topping*. A godly Man delighteth more in God and his Word, than in any worldly thing whatsoever; *Lord lift thou up* (saith *David*, *Psal. 4. 6. 7.*) *the light of thy countenance upon us*: *thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their Corn, and their Wine increased.* So also, *Psal. 43. 4.* — *Unto God my exceeding joy.* *Pf. 137. 6.* *If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* And *Psal. 119. 72, 127.* The delight of a Saint in Gods Word, *over-toppeth* all his Creature delights and

and enjoyments, and for the joy he finds in it, *he will sell all that he hath to purchase it*, Mat. 13. 44. But the joy of a wicked man is of an *inferiour nature*, he rejoyceth more in Corn, Wine, and Oil &c. And when it comes into competition, he will leave his spiritual and heavenly, rather than lose his creature and carnal pleasures. Thus Herod rejoyced in the word that *John Baptist* preached, but he rejoyced more in his *Herodias*; and when it came to the tryal, he chose to behead *John Baptist*, rather than to part with *Herodias*.

The stony ground when Persecution arose parted with all its Joy and Faith, rather then it would lose its Estate, or Life. As a godly man *rejoyceth in Worldly things, as though he rejoyced not*, 1 Cor. 7. 30. So a wicked man *rejoyceth in Spiritual things, as though he rejoyced not*. In the Old Law those Fowls that did both fly and swim, were unclean. A wicked man would many times *fly aloft in Spiritual delights*, but he would also *bathe himself, and swim in Carnal Pleasures*, and his Heart is more affected with Worldly Advancement, and Bodily Recreations, than with Heavenly; and this is a sign that he is an *unclean Christian*, and that his delights in God, and his Word, are not right, because they are not *over-topping and superlative*.

4. It is *powerful and soul-strengthening*, full of life, vigour, and activity; it will enable the Soul to do and suffer any thing for God, it turns a *Prison* into a *Paradise*, it makes *Martyrdom* to be as a *bed of Roses*, it is *Armour of proof* to steel us, and make us fit to endure afflictions, both for God, and from God; Therefore *David* saith in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should then have perished in Affliction*. His delight in the Law supported him from sinking. It is like *Oyl* to the *Wheels*,

Wheels, like *Sails* to the *Ship*, and *Wings* to the *Bird*; but the delight that a wicked man hath in the *Word*, is a *powerless*, *dead*, *fruitless*, and *strengthless* delight; it is a *Paper Helmet*, and a *Painted Fire*, it will not support him in the hour of adversity. The persons represented by the stony ground, fell away, notwithstanding their joy, as soon as ever Persecution arose for the Gospel. But the joy of a true Saint is *Soul-supporting*, and *Soul-upholding*. *The joy in the Lord is their strength*, Nehemiah 8. 10.

5. The delight that a godly man hath in the *Word*, is *sin-excluding*, it cannot consist with a delight in any sin; therefore David saith, *Psal. 119. 11. Thy Word have I hid in my Heart, that I might not sin against thee*. Sin is as a wooden window, to shut out the true joys of the Spirit. But now a wicked man, though he may delight in the *Word*, yet he also delights in sinning against the *Word*. Although Herod heard John Baptist gladly, yet he kept his Herodias; and though the Israelites delighted to know Gods ways, yet they did not delight to walk in his ways. They were as a Nation that did Righteousness; he doth not say, they were such, but *quasi gens*, &c. as a Nation that did Righteousness. And though they delighted to approach to God, yet they did not delight to obey that God before whom they approached; they took pleasure in sinning against God, as well as in serving of God. *Isa. 58*. It was not a *sin-excluding* joy, and therefore it was false and counterfeit.

6. It is *Grace encreasing*. The more a Saint delights in the *Word of God*, the more careful he will be to obey the *Will of God*, and to grow and encrease in the *Grace of God*; therefore David saith, *Psal. 119. 167. My Soul hath kept thy testimonies, for*
I love

I love them exceedingly. And Psal. 40. 8. I delight to do thy Will, O my God, yea thy Law is within my Heart. Because the Law was written in his Heart, therefore he delighted to do it. He that delights to keep Gods Law, God will give him more grace to keep it, according to that remarkable Text, Psal. 119. 55, 56. I have remembered thy Name O Lord, and have kept thy Law, this I had, because I have kept thy Precepts. What had David for keep- Gods Precepts? He had power to keep his Law; that is to grow and increate in keeping of it. As the Prophet, Hos. 6. 3. speaks of the knowledge of God. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; that is, if we industriously labour to know God, we shall have this reward, to be made able to know him more. So may I say of the Grace of God; He that delights to keep Gods Law, shall have this reward, to be enabled to keep it more perfectly.

A true delight in Gods Word is Grace increasing. Grace is the Mother of all true joy, Isa. 32. 17. and joy is as the Daughter and the Mother and Daughter live and dye together. True Spiritual delight ebbs and flows as Grace ebbs and flows. As the Wood is to the Fire, Oil to the Flame, the Shadow to the Body, so is Joy to Grace. *Quantum crescis in gratia, tantum dilataris in fiducia.* But now a wicked man, though he may have a kind of delight in Gods Word, yet it is not a delight of the right kind; it doth not argue that he hath true Grace in him.

An Hypocrite is all Joy and no Grace: A Giant in Joy, and not so much as a Dwarf in Grace; like a green Bough tied to a dead Tree. He is in the highest form of joy, and not so much as in the lowest form of Grace.

7. The delight that a godly man hath in the Word,

48 *The Saints delight in the Word,*

Word, is not only a delight in *Spiritual things* but a *Spiritual delight*, grounded upon *Spiritual* aims and reasons. But the delight of a Wicked Man, though it be in *spiritual things*, yet it is but a *natural delight*. As a Godly Man *spiritualizeth Carnal things*; so an Ungodly man *carnalizeth Spiritual things*. Austin before his Conversion, rejoiced much to hear Ambrose Preach, but it was because of his eloquence (as he said) not upon a *Spiritual account*. A wicked man may follow a Preacher, and delight in his Preaching, because of his *Elegant words*, and *Rhetorical expressions*, because he is unto him as a very lovely Song of one that hath a pleasant voice, &c. as it is Ezek. 33. 32. Or out of novelty, because newly come (as the *Israelites* delighted in *Manna* at first, but afterwards loathed it) or because he loves his person; or out of a desire to obtain a form of knowledge in *Heavenly things*. The Pharisees delighted to do many *Spiritual things* out of *vain glory*. Jebu delighted to do the Will of God, but it was for his own ends. *Pauci quærunt Jesum, propter Jesum*. Stelle is of opinion, that the Devil perswaded Herod to hear John Baptift gladly, and to reverence him, and to do many things, that so he might hold him the faster in his possession. The Devil had him sure by one sin, and therefore he provoked him to do some good things, that so he might rock him asleep in presumption; and by his good things he might quiet his Conscience, and put a fair gloss upon his incestuous practices: A man may rejoyce in *Spiritual things* upon *sinful grounds* and reasons. But now a true Saint delights in the word upon a *Spiritual account*, because it is *Gods Word*, and God would have him delight in it, because it is his guide to glory, the way by which he

is sanctified. It is both *concha & canalis*, A Cistern to contain the glorious *Mysteri*es of Sa'vation, and a *Conduit* to convey God and grace into his Soul.

In a Word, he delights in it, because it is Holy and Pure; he can say with David, *Psal. 119. 140. Thy word is very pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it.* This no wicked Man can truly say.

8. The delight that a godly Man takes in the Word, is without any reservation or distinction. He delights in the whole Word of God, in the commanding, and threatening word, as well as in the promising word; he beholds God, and his wisdom and goodness in every verse, and therefore he can say with *Hezekiah*, *Isa. 39. 8. God is the Word of the Lord.* He hath the whole Law written in his Heart, and rejoiceth in every Title of it. But a wicked Man hath his reservations and distinctions, he may delight in the promising word, but he undervalues the commanding word, and turneth a deaf ear to the threatening word. It is said of the Jews, that they rejoiced in the light of *John Baptist*; but it is not said, They rejoiced in his heat: He was a burning and a shining light; they rejoiced in his shining, but not in his burning. It is hardly possible for a wicked Man remaining wicked, to rejoice in the burning zeal, holiness and strictness of a *John Baptist*. But a godly Man delighteth both in the light and heat of the Word.

9. It is an abiding delight, *2 Thes. 2. 18. Everlasting consolation*, *John 16. 22. Your joy no Man taketh from you.* It is as a fixed Star. But the delight of a wicked Man in the word is as the crackling of Thorns upon the fire, and as the Corn that grew on the stony ground, which quickly sprung up, and as quickly withered, *Job. 27. 8. There-*

fore it is said of the Jews, *John* 5. 3. They rejoiced in his light for a season. In the Greek it is, *προς τὴν ὥραν*, for an hour. A wicked Mans delight in the Word, is but as a *Blazing Star*, which is quickly extinguished. He may joyce in the Word, while he is hearing of it, but it quickly vanisheth away. He is like to a Man that comes into a pleasant Garden, and is delighted with the smell of it, while he is there: But a Child of God makes a *Posse of those Flowers*, to refresh him when he is out. He delights to read, and to keep the *Law of God continually, for ever and ever*, *Psal.* 119. 45. Let us (I beseech you) labour, with all labour, for this superlative, well-rooted, powerful, spiritual, *fin* excluding, grace-increasing and abiding delight, in the whole Word of God.

Quest. What must we do, that we may be inabled thus to make the Law of God our Delights?

Ans. 1. You must seriously study the *Excellency of Gods Word*; this made David prize it so much, *Psal.* 19. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The Word of God hath God for its Author, and therefore must needs be full of infinite Wisdom and Eloquence, even the Wisdom and Eloquence of God. There is not a word in it, but breaths out God, and is breathed out by God. It is (as *Irenæus* saith) *καὶ τὴν τῆς πίστεως ἀκλίνην*, an invariable rule of Faith; an unerring and infallible guide to Heaven. It contains glorious Revelations and Discoveries, no where else to be found. It hath a manifesting, convincing, soul-humbling, soul-directing, soul-converting, and soul-comforting power, and efficacy in it, as appears by these Scriptures, *Heb.* 4. 12. 1 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. 1 *Kings* 21. 29. *Psalms* 119. 105. 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. *Psalms* 119. 50. And therefore to delight in the Word, and the God that made it, is not only

our Duty, *Psalms*. 37. 4. But it is Recorded in Scripture as our Priviledge, and as the great Reward that God would bestow upon those that keep Holy the Sabbath-Day, *Isa.* 58. 13, 14. Then thou shalt delight thy self in the Lord, This shall be thy great Reward.

2. You must fixedly ponder the necessity of practising this Duty. For if you delight in Gods Law, God will delight in you. If the Law be your beloved, you are Gods beloved; If you take no pleasure in his Word, his Soul will take no pleasure in you.

3. You must pray for the grace of *Illumination*. Whensoever you take the Bible into your Hand to read in it, pray Davids prayer, *Psalms* 119. 18. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law. Philosophers observe, that *Lumen est vehiculum influentiae*, Light is the Chariot of Influence; as it begets the Flower in the Field, the Gold in the Mineral; so the Foundation of all Regeneration, is *Illumination*. Pray that God would open your eyes that you may understand the Scriptures, as he did to his Apostles, *Luke* 24. 45. That he would take away the Vail that is upon your Hearts.

4. Pray that he that made you Creatures, would make you new Creatures, that, as new-born Babes, you may desire the sincere Milk of the Word.

5. Pray that God would fulfil that excellent promise, *Jer.* 31. 33. That he would put his Law in your inward parts, and write it in your Hearts, and then you cannot but heartily delight in it.

6. Pray to God to give you the same Spirit that wrote the Word to enable you to delight in it.

7. Pray for a *Spiritual Palate* that you may not only delight in *Spiritual Things*, but have a *Spiritu-*

al delight in Spiritual Things. It is said of the Lions, that when she hath once tasted of the sweetness of Mans flesh, she is never satisfied till she hath more of it. He that hath tasted of the good Word of God, and not only tasted, but eaten it, and digested it into good nourishment, he will not only delight in it, but he will delight in it, above Gold, yea, above fine Gold, and he will never be satisfied, till he be filled with the fulness of that God that made it.

The End of the Second Sermon.

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THE
 Excellency and Usefulness
 OF THE
 WORD.

SERMON III.

PSAL. 119. 92.

*Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should
 then have perished in mine Affliction.*

NOW I come to speak of the Proposition that
 is clearly held forth in the Text.

Doct. 3. *That the Word of God delighted in, is the af-
 flicted Saints Antidote against ruine and destruction,*
Unless thy Law had been my delights, I should, &c.

The Word of God is the sick Saints salve, the dy-
 ing Saints Cordial, a precious medicine to keep
 Gods people from perishing in time of affliction :
 This upheld Jacob from sinking, when his Brother

Esau came furiously marching to destroy him, *Gen. 32. 12.* and thou saidst, *I will surely do thee good, &c.* The Promise of God supported him. This also upheld *Joshua*, and enabled him courageously to fight the Lords Battels, because God had said, *He would never leave him nor forsake him, Josh. 1. 5.* *Melancthon* saith, that the *Lantgrave* of *Hessen* told him at *Dresda.* that it had been impossible for him to have born up under the manifold miseries of so long an imprisonment, *Nisi habuisset consolationem ex Verbo divino in suo corde,* but for the comforts of the Scriptures in his Heart.

There are eight things may be said (amongst many other) in commendation of the Word of God.

1 It is the Magazine and Store-House of all Comfort and Consolation. There is no condition (but one) that a Man can be in, but he may find Soul-supporting comfort for it out of the Word. Indeed if thou resolvest to go on in sin, the Word cannot comfort the; it threatneth Hell and Damnation to all such. If the God of Heaven can make such miserable, they shall be miserable; But excepting this one, there is no condition so miserable, but a Man may fetch a Cordial out of the Word to support him under it. Art thou as empty of Riches, and as full of Diseases, as *Job* under the Old Testament, and *Lazarus* under the New Testament? Are thy sins (with which thou art willing to part) many and great? Is thy Conscience exceedingly wounded and disquieted? Doth the Devil roar upon thee with hideous Temptations? Let thy condition be never so bad, the Word of God is able to afford thee comfort under it. For it is the Word of that God; who is the God of all Consolation. There is no kind of true Comfort, but here it

it is to be had, here are Cordials of all sorts, and Comforts under Soul troubles. There is no Monarch can furnish his Table with such variety of delicacies, as God hath furnished his Word with variety of Comforts.

2. The Word of God is not only the *Magazine* of all true comfort, but the *Fountain* from whence it is derived. All the comfort that you receive by reading of good Books, is fetched out of this Book. All the refreshings that the *Ambassadors of Christ* administer to you, are borrowed from this *Fountain*. As the King of *Israel* answered the Woman (that cryed out, saying: *Help me Lord, O King*) *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* So will *2 Kings 6. 26, 27.*

all the true Ministers of Christ say to any distressed Soul that crys out for Comfort: How can we comfort you? If the Word of God doth not comfort you, all our comforts must be fetcht from thence.

3. It will comfort us at such a time, when no outward thing can comfort us; and that is, when we are under Soul agonies, and when our Soul sits upon our lips, ready to depart, when we are falling into the Ocean of Eternity; then even then, the Promises of the Word will comfort us: When Gold and Silver, Father and Mother, Friends and Physitians are miserable Comforters, then will one Promise out of the Word fill us full of joy unspeakable, and glorious.

4. The comforts of the Word exceed all other Comforts, for they are pure, and purifying, sure and satisfying; they are Soul-supporting, Soul-comforting, and Soul-ravishing, they are durable and everlasting. The Comforts of the World are not worthy to be named that day, in which we speak of the comforts.

of the Word. They are not *consolationes*, but *consolatiunculae*. At best they are but bodily, unsatisfying and transitory; many times they are sinful, and Soul-damning.

5. The Word of God is not only a *Magazine* and a *Fountain* of comfort, but also a *Touch-Stone* by which we must try all our Comforts, whether they are true and real, or no. All Joys, Hopes, and Assurances, must be tryed by the Word, and if not rightly grounded thereupon, are false, and Soul-delusions.

6. It is an *Apothecaries Shop*, or a *Physicians Dispensatory* out of which we may fetch all manner of *Medicines*, to cure all the Diseases of our Souls. Art thou spiritually Lame, Blind or Dumb, &c. The Word will open blind Eyes, make the Dumb to speak, and the Lame to walk. If dead in sins and trespasses, the Word, when it is the Sword of the Spirit, will quicken thee: It is as a *Corrosive* to eat sin out of thy Heart; therefore David saith, *I have hid thy Word in mine Heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

7. It is a *Spiritual Armory*, out of which we may fetch all manner of weapons, to conquer the Devil and his Temptations. 2 Cor. 10. 4. It is that little Brook, out of which every David may fetch five smooth stones to destroy the Devil. These five smooth stones, are five Texts of Scripture, three of these Christ took out of the Brook of the Word, by which he subdued the Devil, Matth. 4. 4, 7, 10.

8. It is the *Sun of the Christian World*. As the Sun is the light of the Natural World, and without it the World is but a Chaos, and a Dungeon full of Darkness. So is the Word of God, the light of the spiritual World, without which a Christian is under

under an eternal Night. Therefore David saith. *Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet, and a Light unto my Path*, Psal. 119. 105. What would all the World avail, if no Sun to enlighten it? And what comfort would all the Wealth of it afford us, if no Word to instruct and Counsel us? For this is the Christians Compass to sail to Heaven by, his staff to walk withal to Heaven, his Spiritual Bladders to keep his Soul from drowning; the Cork, to keep up the net of his Soul from sinking. Afflictions are like the Lead of the Net, which weigheth it down, but the Word is as the Cork, which keeps it up, that it sinks not. So saith David in the Text, *Unless thy Law had been my delights, &c.*

Use. If the Word of God be of such invaluable excellency, absolute Use 2. necessity, and of such admirable use.

1. Let us bless God exceedingly for revealing his Will unto us in the Word. It was a great Honour and Priviledge to the *Jews*, that to them were committed the Oracles of God, Rom. 3. 2. And it is our great Happiness, that we have not only the same Oracles of God which they have, but an addition of the New Testament, for the clearer discovery of the mysteries of Salvation unto us. If God be to be praised for every crumb of Bread we eat, much more for giving us his Word, which is the *Bread of Life*, and the only Food of our Souls. Blessed be God, who hath not only given us the Book of the Creatures, and the Book of Nature to know himself and his Will by, but also and especially the Book of the Scriptures, whereby we come to know those things of God, and of Christ, which neither the Book of Nature, nor of the Creatures can reveal unto us.

Let us bless God, not only for revealing his Will in his Word, but for revealing it by writing. Before the time of *Moses*, God discovered his Will by immediate Revelations from Heaven. But we have a surer word of Prophecie, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. surer (to us) than a voice from Heaven, For the Devil (saith the Apostle) *transforms himself into an Angel of Light.* He hath his apparitions, and revelations, he is Gods Ape, and in imitation of God, he appears to his Disciples, and makes them believe that it is God that appears, and not the Devil. Thus he appeared to *Saul*, in likeness of *Samuel*. And if God should now at this day discover his way of Worship, and his Divine Will by Revelations, how easily would Men be deceived, and mistake Diabolical Delusions, for Divine Revelations; and therefore let us bless God for the written Word, which is surer and safer (as to us) than an immediate Revelation. There are some that are apt to think; that if an Angel should come from Heaven, and Reveal Gods Will to them, it would work more upon them, than the written Word; but I would have these Men study the conference between *Abraham* and *Dives*, *Luke* 16. 27, 28, 29, 30, 31. *Habent Moses & Prophetas, &c. They have Moses and the Prophets;* if they will not profit by them, neither would they profit by any that should come out of Hell, or down from Heaven to them: For it is the same God that speaks by his written Word, and by a voice from Heaven. The difference is only in the outward cloathing; and therefore if Gods speaking by writing, will not amend us, no more will Gods speaking by a voice. O bless God exceedingly for the written Word! Let us cleave close to it, and not expect any Revelations from Heaven of new truths,

truths, but say with the Apostle, *Gal. 1. 8, 9*

Use 2. *Let us prize the Word of God above Gold, yea, above fine Gold*: Let us read it diligently, reverently, praying to God to give us the same Spirit that wrote it, to enable us to understand it, and conscientiously to practise it. Let us make it the joy and rejoycing of our Heart; and as it is in the Text, let us make it our *Delights*, but of this I spake in the former point. The only motive I shall now use to perswade you to make the Word your *delights*, shall be this in the Text, Because it *will keep you from perishing in the time of your greatest affliction*; It will comfort you when you have most need of it (that is, under heart-sinking afflictions, and at the hour of death) and it will comfort you, when all outward comforts and creatures fail. It will be food to strengthen your weak Faith, Physick to cure the remainders of corruptions, it will be a Cordial to revive your drooping Spirits, and fainting Souls. It will make you more than Conquerours over all Temptations and Distresses.

Quest. But now the great Question is, *How a Child of God ought to manage and make use of the Word of God, so as to make it a Conduit of Support and Comfort in the day of his greatest Afflictions?*

Ans^r. To be able to do this, there is a great deal of spiritual wisdom and understanding required. For the Word to many people is like *Sauls Armor* to *David*, which was so cumbersome to him, that he could not wear it.

There are many know not how to use the Word, so as to be comforted by it. As the Woman of *Samaria* told Christ; *John 4. 11. The Well is deep, and thou hast nothing to draw with.* So may I say, The Word of God is a *Isa 4.* deep well, it is a Well of Salvation,

But

but it is deep, and the deeper the sweeter, but most people want buckets to draw with, they want a spiritual art to fetch out of these Wells of Salvation, divine supportation, and consolation; and therefore to help you in this great work you must know.

The Word of God divided into the commanding, threatning and Promising Words.

That the Word of God may be divided into three parts; into *Commandements*, *Threatnings*, and *Promises*: And though a Christian must not neglect the Commanding and Threatning Word, yet if ever he would make the Word a Channel of Divine Comfort, he must study the Promising Word, for the Promises are a Christians *Magna Charta* for Heaven. All comfort must be built upon a Scripture Promise, else it is Presumption, not true comfort. The Promises are *pabulum fidei*, *et anima fidei*, the food of Faith, and the soul of Faith. As faith is the Life of a Christian, so the Promises are the Life of Faith: *Faith is a dead Faith*, if it hath no Promise to quicken it; As the Promises are of no use without Faith to apply them, so Faith is of no use without a Promise to lay hold on. And the great reason why the people of God walk uncomfortably in their Afflictions, is, because they do not chew the promises; they are rare Cordials, but as a Man cannot taste the sweetness of a Cordial, unless he chew it, no more can we receive any spiritual refreshment from the Promises, unless we meditate on them. The Promises are as a Mine full of rich Treasure: But as Mines, unless we dig deep into them, we can never get the Gold and Silver hid in them, no more can we enjoy the Soul ravishing

wishing comfort of the Promises, unless we dig into them by a serious consideration of them. They are as a Garden full of rare Flowers, able to sweeten any condition: But because we do not walk in this Garden, and pick out these Flowers, hence it is that we live so disconsolately, and dejectedly under our Afflictions. There are many rare stories declaring the comfort that some of Gods Saints have received from the Promises in the Day of their Distress. Mr. *Bilney* that blessed Martyr, was much wounded in Conscience by reason of the great sin he committed, in subscribing to the Popish Errors, but he was much comforted by reading those words, *1 Tim. 1. 15. This is a Faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners, of which I am the chief.* *Bezæ* was supported under his Troubles, by the words of Christ, *John 10. 27, 28, 29.* Mr. *Bolton* tells us of one that was upheld under great Affliction, and comforted from *Isa. 26. 3.* Of another, from *Isa. 57. 15.* I knew a young Maid that went Triumphantly to Heaven, by the refreshing she found in that well known Text, *Matth. 11. 28.* and many that have been wonderfully cheered by reading the *8th.* of the *Romans*, and by that Text, *1 John 3. 14. We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren.* The Truth is, there is no Promise, but if God be pleased to *illighten* it, and shew us our interest in it, will afford a harvest of joy. It is with Promises, as it is with Sermons: That Sermon which once heard, did not at all work upon us, the same Sermon heard at another time, may exceedingly affect us. And the same Text of Scripture which sometimes doth not at all comfort us, may at another time convey much comfort to

62 *How to improve the Word, &c.*

us. Two Men troubled in Conscience may both of them read the same Chapter, and hear the same Sermon, and one of them may have his troubled mind pacified, and the other continue troubled, and the reason is, because the Spirit of God makes the Word *effectual to one, and not to the other*. How often hath a distressed Saint read *Mat. 11. 28. 1 Tim. 1. 15. John 10. 27, 28. Isa. 26. 3. Isa. 57. 15. 1 John 3. 14.* and found no comfort in reading of them? But if the Spirit of God did come in, and open his Eyes to behold the rich mercies wrapt up in these Promises, and his Interest in them, they would fill him with comfort above expression. And therefore if ever you would make the Word of God, Gods instrument to conveigh support and comfort to you in the time of Soul-sinking Afflictions, you must study the Promises, and pray unto God that his Spirit may irradiate them, and shew you the fulness of them, and your Interest in them.

Quest. How must we improve the Promises, so as to make them spiritual Bladders, to keep us from being drowned in the deep Waters of Affliction?

Ans. You must do three things.

Three things to be done by those that would improve the promises.	1. You must make a Catalogue of the Promises.
	2. You must seriously ponder and meditate on them.
	3. You must apply them to your own Souls, as belonging to you in particular.

1. You must make a Catalogue of the Promises, you must gather them up, as they lie scattered in the Word, into a *Spiritual Nose-*

gay, and bind them together: You must do as they that gather up ends of Gold and Silver, you must lose none. Every promise is as a Ray of Gold, as a Star in the Firmament. And though there are Stars of divers magnitudes, differing from one another in Glory, yet every Star hath its beauty and benefit: So though some Promises are more glorious than others (like the Sun in comparison of the Moon) yet every Promise hath its beauty, and lustre: and as star-light in a dark night is very comfortable; so in the dark night of Affliction, every little Promise will afford unspeakable comfort to a troubled Soul.

To help you in making this Catalogue, give me leave to suggest three things.

1. Be sure to make it in time of health. **W**o be to those that have their Promises to gather, when they should make use of them. *You that slight the Promises in prosperity, shall receive no comfort from them in adversity.*

2. Forget not to treasure up all those Promises which God hath made to his Children, in the day of their adversity. As for example, God hath promised in *all our afflictions to be with us*, Isa. 43. 2. *When thou passest through the Waters, I will be with thee, and through the Rivers they shall not overflow thee, &c.* he will be with you, to protect and direct you, to support and comfort you. *If three Saints be put into the Fiery Furnace, the Son of God will make the fourth*, Dan. 3. 25.

2. God will be afflicted in all our afflictions, *Isai. 63. 9.* He suffers in all our sufferings, *Acts*
9. 4.

3. He

3. He will make our *Beds in our sickness*, Psal. 41. 2. He will condescend to the lowest office for our ease and refreshment.

4. He will *know our Souls in adversity*, Psal. 31. 7. He will know us to pity us, and to succour, and to help us.

5. He will keep us from the evil of all afflictions, *Job 5. 19.* God hath not promised to keep his People from afflictions, but to keep them from the hurt of them. Though they are not good in themselves, yet he will turn them to our good, *Heb. 12. 10.* *1 Cor. 11. 32.* *Jer. 24. 5.* The good Figs were carried into captivity for their good. God hath promised that all *things shall work together for our good*, *Rom. 8. 28.* not onely all Ordinances, &c. but all Afflictions, &c.

6. God hath promised to *lay no more upon us, than we are able to bear*, but either to give us less pain, or greater patience, *1 Cor. 10. 13.* And though in a little wrath he hid his Face from us for a moment, yet *with everlasting kindness will he have mercy on us*, &c. *Isa. 54. 7, 8.* These, and many such like Promises, will be as so many Spiritual Cordials to revive our fainting Spirits, and as so many Pillars to uphold us under the greatest affliction.

3. For the compleating of this *Catalogue*, you may make use of many excellent Books written for this purpose, wherein you shall have Promises of all kinds; both Spiritual and Temporal gathered together: Yet let me advise you
Mr. Lee on not to rest satisfied with the collecti-

Make a Catalogue of the Promises. 65

ons of others, but when you read the Promi-
the Bible, and meet with a suitable ses, Mr. Ball,
Promise. with which God is pleased Mr. Bulkley.
to affect your Hearts, take the pains
to write it down, and one such Promise of your
own writing, will work more powerfully upon
your Souls, than many others of anothers gather-
ing. So much for the first, viz. *Make a Catalogue
of the Promises.*

The End of the Third Sermon.
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Advertisement TO THE READER.

Reader,

THIS and the following Sermon contains a large Discourse about the Promises, which because it may be thought by some to be impertinent to the Text, and rather a Digression from it, than an explication of it; I crave leave to inform thee of two things.

1. That the Promises are the Principal ground of Comfort to a Child of God, in a day of his Adversity; They are his chief City of Refuge, when all Creature-comforts fail; when he suffers Ship-wrack of all humane props, these are his Planks upon which he swims safe to the shoar of Heaven. All Comfort that is not founded upon a Promise,

is Delusion, not true Consolation. And therefore a Discourse about them, cannot rationally be interpreted Eccentrical to the Text.

2. That there are divers particulars added to these Sermons, concerning the Nature, Necessity, Excellency, and Usefulness of the Promises, which were not mentioned in the Preaching of them. And if any of them shall appear to be Heterogeneous to the Text; yet if they prove serviceable to heighten thy esteem of the Promises, and to quicken thee to a more serious and frequent Meditation on them, and Application of them, I hope thou art not at all injured; And I may justly desire, that thou wouldst not be offended.

It is reported of St. Austin (in his life written by Possidius) that by a digression (in one of his Sermons) from his Text, he converted an Heretick from his erroneous Opinions. If any passage in these two Sermons prove useful to turn thee from thy sinful Negligence, and to awaken thee to a more diligent study of the precious Promises, I shall account it a happy and blessed Digression; For herein especially consisteth the difference between a Religious Christian, and a Moral Man. A Moral Man will abstain from the outward act

acts of sin; But he knows not what it is to live upon Promises; He never tasted any sweetness in a Promise; He lives upon Creatures, not upon Promises; and therefore when Creatures fail, his heart sinks like a stone, and he is at his Wits end, and Faiths end. But a Religious Christian lives upon Promises, and not upon Creatures; and therefore when Creatures fail, he hath the Promises to live on; He labours to taste the sweetness that is in them. He lives upon Promises, when Providence seems to run cross to Promises. They are his Fiery Chariot, to carry him up to Heaven. If then these ensuing Sermons, inflame thy affections with a greater love to the Promises, and a greater care to meditate on them, and to get an interest in them, thou hast cause to bless God, and to pray for.

Thy unworthy
Servant in
Christ.

Ed. Calamy.

MEDI-

MEDITATE

ON THE

PROMISES.

SERMON IV.

PSAL. 119. 92.

*Unless thy Law had been my Delights, I should
then have perished in mine Afflictions.*

HE that would improve the *Promises*. so as to make them spiritual *Bladders*, to keep him from being drowned in the deep *Waters of Affliction*, must not only make a *Catalogue of the Promises* but he must also,

2. Fixedly and seriously meditate on them; first, he must Treasure up these Jewels in his Heart and then unlock them by meditation; first, he must take his Nose gay, and then smell of it. The Word of God
(as

mises, but (as I have said) is as a Garden full of
 meditate excellent *Promises*, as so many choice
 on them. Flowers; and it is our Duty to walk

often in this Garden, to gather up
 all the flowers that lye scattered in it, into sever-
 al Nose-gays, to bind them together (if I may
 so speak) with the thread of Faith, and then eve-
 ry day to smell of them. The *Promises* are the
Saints Legacies left them by Christ in his last *Will*
 and *Testament*. The Saints are called the *Heirs* of
 the *Promises*, Heb. 6. 17. And if they would be fil-
 led full of joy in the day of their distress, they
 must be frequent in reading these Legacies: The
Promises are (as it were) the *Breasts of God*, full
 of the *Milk of Grace and Comfort*; and it is our
 duty to be sucking out (by meditation) the Milk
 of Grace and Comfort contained in them. That
 which the Prophet saith of the Church of Christ,
 may as truly be said of the Promises of Christ.

Rejoyce O ye people of God, and be glad
 Isa. 66. 10, all ye that have an interest in the Promi-
 .11. ses; Rejoyce for joy, all ye that are mourn-
 ers in Sion, that ye may suck and be sa-

tisfied with the breasts of their Consolations, that ye
 may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of
 Joy and Comfort contained in them. The Promises
 are the Saints *Aqua vitae* (as one calls them) the
 Saints Cordials, the Saints Plank to swim to Hea-
 ven upon, the Saints Fiery Chariot, to carry them
 up to Heaven? And the great reason why they
 walk so uncomfortably, so disconsolately, and so
 unbelievably, in the time of their Tribulation, is
 because they do not smell of these *Nose-gays*, they
 do not chew these Cordials, they do not read over
 these spiritual Legacies, they do not by serious
 Meditation and Consideration, suck out the com-
 fort

fort comprehended in them. For as Fire will not warm us, unless we tarry at it, and as a Bee cannot suck out the Honey that is in a Flower, unless she abide upon it: No more can a Child of God receive supportation, and consolation from the Promises in the hour of Temptation, unless he seriously and solemnly ponder and meditate on them.

There is a double difference between a *presumptuous sinner*, and a *poor, humble, distressed Child of God*.

I. A *presumptuous sinner* studieth nothing but the Promising Word: The difference between a presumptuous sinner, and a true Child of God in relation to the Promises. He slights the *commanding*, and the *threatning Word*. The Word commands him to keep holy the Sabbath Day, not to love the World, nor to lust, but he turns a deaf ear to it. The word threatneth to wound the *hairy scalp of every one that goeth on in his wickedness*; but because God is patient and long suffering, therefore he regards it not. But as for the Promising word, he snatcheth at it, he doth not truly lay hold on it, but snatcheth at it, before it belongs to him, and Spider-like, sucks the poyson of sin out of it, and makes of it a Cradle to rock himself asleep in sinful courses. Because God hath promised, *That whensoever a sinner turns from his sins which he hath committed, he shall surely live, and not dye*, therefore he delays and preroques his turning from sin.

But now a *poor, distressed, humble Christian*, fails on the contrary part; he pores upon the *commanding and threatning Word*, but never ponders the *promising Word*. God (saith he) commands me to love

love him with all my Heart and Soul, to wash my Heart from iniquity, to love my Enemies, to cut off my right Hand, and to pluck out my right Eye, &c. But I cannot perform these commands, therefore surely I shall never be saved. God (saith he) hath threatened to curse every one that continueth not in every thing that is written in his Law to do it, and therefore surely I am accursed. But he never studies, nor ponders the promising Word, for if he did, he would quickly know three things, for his everlasting comfort.

Three observable things about the Promises.

Eze. 18. 31.

Eze. 36. 26.

Jer. 32. 40.

Mic. 7. 19.

Rom. 6. 14.

Isa. 26. 12.

Jer. 31. 33.

Eze. 36. 27.

1. That there is nothing required by God in his Word as our duty, but God hath either promised to bestow it upon us as his gift, or the Saints have prayed to God for it as his gift. God commands us to love him, but he hath promised to Circumcise our Hearts to love him, &c. Deut. 30. 6. God commands us to fear him, to turn our selves from our Transgressions, and to make our selves a new Heart, and a new Spirit. But he hath promised to give us a new Heart, and a new Spirit, to put his fear in our Hearts, that we shall never depart from him, and to turn us from our Evil ways. The Saints of God also have prayed unto God for this, as the fruit of his free mercy, Jer. 31. 18. Lam. 5. 21. There is nothing commanded in the Covenant of works, but God hath promised it in the Covenant of Grace, in some measure to work it in us, for he hath promised to work all our works in us, and to write his Law (not one Commandement of it only, but the whole Law) in our Hearts, and to put it in our inward parts, and to cause us to walk in his ways.

2. That

2. That God under the Covenant of Grace, will for Christs sake accept of less than he requires in the Covenant of works. He requires perfection of degrees, but he will accept of perfection of parts; he requires us to live without sin, but he will accept of our sincere endeavours to do it. If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not, 2 Cor. 8. 12.

3. That though he cannot in his own person perform all that God commands, yet Jesus Christ, as his Surety, and in his stead, hath fulfilled the Law for him, and that God will accept of Christs perfect, as a cover for his imperfect Righteousness. That Christ hath redeemed him from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for him. That the Threatnings of the Law are Serpents without a sting, and that Christ hath taken away the power and force of them.

Did a broken-hearted, and wounded sinner, ponder and meditate on these things, they would fill him full of joy and comfort; He would flee from the Covenant of Works, to the Covenant of Grace; from his own righteousness, unto the righteousness of Christ; and from the commanding and threatening word, unto the promising word, he would say, Lord, Thou commandest me to walk in thy Statutes, and to keep thy Laws; This I cannot do of my self, but thou hast promised to cause me to walk in thy ways, and to write thy Law in my Heart. Lord give me power to do what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt.

Domine
da quod
jubes, &
jube quod
vis. Aug.

2. A presumptuous sinner is always studying the promising Word, to bolster up himself in sin, but he never studies his *sins and iniquities*, to repent for them, and from them. He meditates on the Promises to harden his Heart in sin, but not at all on his sins to humble himself for them, and to turn from them.

But now on the contrary, A poor distressed Christian pores upon his *iniquities and corruptions*, but never minds himself of the *Promises*, and this makes him live so dejectedly, and disconsolately. A wicked man studieth his Corruptions too little; A distressed Christian too much. If he did study the Promises, as much as he doth his corruptions, he would not walk so uncomfortably.

Wherefore if ever you would make the Word of God a Conduit of Comfort in the day of your distress: you must not only meditate on the commanding and threatening word, but on the promising word. The Commandments and Threatnings must drive you to the Promises; you must not only study your corruptions to humble you, but also the Promises to comfort you. I do not say you must not study your corruptions, but you must join the study of the Promises together with them. If Abraham had minded onely the deadness of Sarahs Womb, and of his own Body, he had never believed, &c. but he was strong in Faith, and staggered not, because he considered not his own Body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old. nor the deadness of Sarahs Womb, but was fully perswaded, that what God had promised, he was able to perform. If Sarah had considered only that she was past age, she would never have believed that she should have a Child,

Rom. 4.19,
20, 21.

Child, but she eyed the Promise, and judged him faithful, who had promised, Heb. II. II. and that made her believe. If a Saint of God looks only downwards upon the deadness of his Heart, and meditates only upon his sins and infirmities, he will never be comforted in the day of his distress, But he must also look upwards unto the Promises, seriously ponder, and fixedly study them; which will be as strong Pillars to support him, and keep him from falling into despair, in the hour of tribulation.

Quest. What are the Meditations which we must have in reference and relation to the Promises in the day of our distress?

Ans. I will rank them into nine particulars.

1. You must meditate upon the three great truths already mentioned.

The first meditation about the Promises.

1. That God commands nothing as our duty, which he hath not promised, as his gift.

2. That God in the Covenant of Grace, will accept of less than he requires in the Covenant of Works.

3. That if we truly believe in Christ, God will accept of his righteousness, as a satisfaction for our unrighteousness.

The second meditation meditate on the preciousness of the Promises. 2 Pet.

2. You must meditate upon the excellency and preciousness of the Promises, they are called *τίμα καὶ μέγιστα ἐπαγγέλματα*, exceeding great and precious Promises; They are precious in five respects.

1. 4. The Promises are precious in five respects.

1. Because they cost a great price (even the blood of Christ) to purchase them. They are all made to us in Christ, and for Christ; they are

2 Cor. 1. 20.

in him, yea, and in him, Amen.

The Covenant (which is the *Pandæa* and Cabinet of all the Promises) was sealed with his blood.

1. Because they assure us of great and precious things; they assure us of our Interest in God, of our Justification, Reconciliation, Adoption, Sanctification, and Glorification, Heaven it self is nothing else but the enjoyment of the promises, Heb. 6. 12. The Promises are Heaven folded up; Heaven is the Promise unfolded. For the Promises are nothing else, but the eternal purposes of God towards his Children made manifest. The Purposes of God are his concealed Promises; and the Promises are his Revealed Purposes. The Promises are the kisses of Jesus Christ, they discover his dear love; and when he discovers to us our interest in them, then he kisses us with the kisses of his mouth, and fills us with joy unspeakable and glorious. They are made by God, and they make over God to us, as our Portion, and Christ as our Saviour, and the Spirit as our Sanctifier, and all good things both here and hereafter as our Inheritance, and therefore may well be called exceeding great and precious Promises.

3. Because

3. Because they put a price upon the New Testament; for wherein doth the New Testament exceed the Old, unless it be in this, because it is founded upon better Promises? Heb. 8. 6. and bringeth in a better hope; Heb. 7. 19.

4. Because they put a price upon all the blessings of God. A little mercy reached out to us, as a fruit of a Promise is more worth than a World of Blessings coming to us meerly by way of Providence. A man may receive blessings from God upon a double account, either *ex largitate* or *ex promisso*, either by way of Providence, or by way of Promise.

1. By way of Providence: Thus God gives the Earth to the Sons of Men, Psal. 115. 16. Thus he gave one hundred twenty and seven Provinces to *Ahashuerus*. Thus he sets up the *basest* of Men to rule over Nations, Dan. 4. 17.

2. By way of Promise. Thus he gives health, wealth, and all outward comforts unto his Children. For godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Now you must know that a little blessing coming to us, as a fruit of the promise, is more worth than a thousand blessings coming to us, onely by way of providence. And therefore David saith, *A little that the Righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*, Psalm 37. 16. And the reason is,

1. Because blessings given by vertue of a promise, are signs of Gods special love, and coming to us from the same love with which God gives us Christ, they are the fruit of Covenant-love.

2. Because we have them as blessings, A man may have a blessing and yet not have it as a blessing. The Israelites had Quails sent them immediately.

diately from God, which was a blessing in it self, but was not sent to them as a blessing: For while *the meat was in their Mouths, the wrath of God came upon them.* The wicked have blessings, but not as blessings, but as the Cup in *Benjamins Sack*, which proved a snare to him, rather than a mercy. But the Godly have blessings as blessings: They have Grace with them to improve them for Gods glory, they have not onely the blessings, but a thankful Heart for them, and a fruitful Heart under them, which is a certain sign that they have them as blessings.

3. Because they are pledges to them of better mercies, and beginnings of better, they are not *merces*, but *arrha*, not their *wages*, but an *earnest* of Heaven. Now a Farthing given as an earnest of a thousand a year, is more worth than many pounds given as a reward. A wicked man hath outward blessings as his Portion, his Heaven, his All; but a Godly man that hath them by *virtue of a Promise*, hath them as a *pledge of Heaven*, and as a *beginning of eternal mercies*.

5. The Promises are Precious because they *produce great and precious effects*; They are not only excellent in themselves, but are also very powerful and operative upon all Believers. The Promises (as one saith) Sealed by the Blood of Christ, *rati- fied by the Oath of God*, testified by the Spirit of Truth, delivered by the *Hand of Mercy*, and received by the *Hand of Faith*, are operative words, and produce rare effects in the Soul. They have

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|------------------|----------|
| 1. A Sanctifying | } Power. |
| 2. A Comforting | |

1. *A Soul-sanctifying Power.* Therefore they are said to make us *partakers of the Divine Nature*, 2. Pet. 1. 4. I say, of the *Divine Nature*, not by the communication of the *Divine Essence*, but by participation of *Divine-Graces*. Not in a *Familistical sense*, (as if we were Godded into God, and Christ-ed into Christ) but in a *spiritual sense*; we are by the Promises made partakers of the *Divine Nature*, that is, of the *Divine Graces*, by which we are made like to God in holiness. The Apostle tells us, that they have a power to *cleanse us from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit, and to enable us to perfect holiness in his fear*, 2 Cor. 7. 1.

2. *A Comforting power.* They are able to comfort us in the worst of days, and dangers. O how precious is a promise to a distressed Christian, in the hour of extremity! The Sun is not more comfortable to a man in a dark Dungeon, or Food to a Man ready to Starve, or Water to a Man ready to dye for thirst. The promises of God are always precious, but never more precious than in times of misery and calamity; and therefore let us in such times especially meditate upon the preciousness of them.

3. You must *meditate upon the freeness* of the promises. The promises are the outward discoveries of Gods eternal love to his people. Now nothing moved God to enter into Covenant with them, and to engage himself to them by promise, and thereby to become their debtor, but his free love and mercy; and therefore they are said to be given us of God, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.* God promiseth in his Word, not only to love us, but

The third Meditation, Meditate on the freeness of the promises.

to love us freely, *Hos. 14. 4. I will beat their back-
sliding, and love them freely.* The reason why God
makes us his people, is not from any worth in us,
but only because it pleaseth him so to do, *1 Sam.
12. 22. The Lord will not forsake his people for his
great Names sake, because it pleased the Lord to make
you his people.* The Lord J^esus Christ, who is the
great and fundamental promise, the root of the
other promises, is freely tendered in the Gospel,
and freely given, *Joh. 3. 16. God so loved the World, that
he gave his only begotten Son, &c. Rev. 22. 17.
Whoever will, let him take the water of Life
freely.*

4. You must meditate on the
The fourth firmness, faithfulness, unchangeable-
Meditati- ness, and immutability of the
on, medi- Promises: they are the Promi-
tate on. ses of that God, who cannot de-
the stabi- ny himself. *Promissa hæc tua sunt Do-
lity of the mine (saith Austin) & quis falli timet,
Promises. cum promittit ipsa veritas; Heaven and
Earth shall pass away, but one Foot or
Tittle of the Word shall not pass.* There is no promise
which God hath made, though never so improba-
ble and impossible to flesh and blood, but it shall
come to pass in due time; whatsoever he hath
promised in his goodness, he will perform by his
power. *God is not a Man that he should lye, neither the
Son of Man that he should repent: Hath he said, and
shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not
make it good? Numb. 23. 19.* God hath promised
that the same Bodies that dye, shall rise again at
the last Day. This is incredible to natural Reason.
The Stoicks and Epicures derided it, when it was
preached by Paul, *Acts 17. 32.* But hath God said
it, and shall he not do it? *Is the Lords hand short-
ned?*

ned? Therefore Christ tells the Sadduces, *Matth. 22. 27. You erre, not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God. God is omnipotent, and therefore able to do above what we can ask or think: God hath promised at the Resurrection, to make our vile Bodies like unto the glorious Body of Christ. This is impossible to natural reason, but mark what the Apostle saith, Phil. 3. 21. Who shall change our vile Bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious Body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself. God hath promised, that before the end of the World, there shall be a National conversion of the Jews, that the Kingdoms of the World shall become the Kingdoms of our Lord and Saviour; And that Babylon shall fall. These are the promises of God, who cannot lye; Faithful is he, who hath said it, who also will do it, 1 Thes. 5. 24. Though the things promised, seem impossible to Men, yet with God all things are possible.*

Rom. II.

25, 26.

Rev. II. 15.

Rev. 18. 2.

Mat. 19.

26.

Therefore the Apostle proves the future Conversion of the Jews, by an Argument drawn from the power of God, *Rom. 11. 23. God is able to grafit them in again.* The like is brought to prove the ruine of Antichrist, *Rev. 18. 8. Her plagues shall come in one day, death, and mourning, and famire, and she shall be utterly burnt with fire, for strong is the Lord God, who judgeth her.* The promises are a firm Foundation to build our Salvation upon, an Anchor, both sure and stedfast. When David was taken by the *Philistines*, he was so supported by the promise of God, that he did not fear what Man could do against him; therefore he repeats it three times, *Psal. 56. 3. 10. In God I will praise his Word, in God I will praise his Word; In God I will praise his*

Word: (that is, his Word of Promise) *I will not fear what flesh can do unto me*: The Scripture builds all the hope and comfort of a Christian upon the Faithfulness of God, 1 Cor. 1. 9. *God is faithful, by whom, &c.* 1 Thes. 5. 23, 24. 1 Cor. 10. 13. *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, &c.* 2 Thes. 3. 3. *The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, &c.* Heb. 10. 33. For he is faithful that hath promised. Memorable is that saying of David, Psal 138. 2. *For thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name*: Which words are to be understood (as David Kimbi, and our English Annotations say) *Hysteron proteron*; that is, thou hast by thy Word (that is, by performing thy Word and Promises) *Magnified thy Name above all things*; or as Ainsworth, Thy word of promise in Christ, and thy faithfulness in performing of it, doth more exalt thy name, than any thing by which thou art made known. O then let all the Saints of God, who are Heirs of the promises, meditate frequently upon the preciousness, freeness, firmness, unchangeableness, and immutability of them.

5. You must meditate upon the
 The fifth meditation meditate on the richness of the Promises. Heb. 8. 17. *fulness and richness of the promises.* The promises are the *Saints Magazine* and *Spiritual Treasure*; they are called the *unsearchable Riches of Christ*, Ephe. 6. 7. It is one of the greatest Titles belonging to a Saint, to be styled *an Heir of the Promises*. That Man that hath a right to all the promises in the Bible, is the richest Man in the World; For *God is his* (and he that hath him that hath all things, hath all things) *Christ is his* (and Christ

Qui habet
 habentem
 omnia,

Christ is all in all) the Spirit is his habet omnia.
(and he who hath the Spirit, hath all)

good things, as appears by comparing *Mat. 7. 11.* with *Luke 11. 13.* In the first it is said—*How much more shall your Father in Heaven, give good things, &c.* In the second, *How much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit, &c.*) Grace and Glory, and all outward good things are his. It is said of the *Great Duke of Guise*, that (though he was poor, as to his present possessions) yet he was the richest Man in *France*, in Bills, Bonds, and Obligations, because he had ingaged all the Noble-men in *France* unto himself, by preferring of them. A true and real Christian is the richest Man in the World, in Promises and Obligations, for he hath the Great God ingaged by promise to be his God, and the God of his. As *Charles the first*, commanded his Herald in a challenge to *Francis the first*, King of *France*, to proclaim him with all his Titles, styling him *Emperor of Germany, King of Castile, Arragon, Naples, Sicily, &c.* But *Francis* commanded his Herald, to call him so often King of *France*, as the other had Titles by his Countries ; implying that *France* alone was more worth, than all his Countries. So when a wicked Man brags of his *Lordships*, and great possessions, when he boasteth of his thousands a year, a Child of God may say, *God is mine, God is mine, &c.* I am richer than all the wicked Men in the World.

6. You must meditate on the Latitute and Extention of the promises. The sixth meditation on the latitute and

The sixth meditation meditate on the latitute and

but

extension of the Promises. but a suitable and seasonable promise to comfort him in it. And here in especially consisteth the *spiritual Excellency*, and *Heavenly Wisdom* of a *Christian*, not only to study the promises in general, but to labour to find out, and having found out, to meditate upon such kind of promises, which are most suitable, and most seasonable to the conditions he is in. As for Example.

If thou art poor in estate, meditate on *Psa. 34. 10. Mat. 6. 33. Heb. 13. 5.*

If barren, and without Children, meditate on, *Isa. 56. 5.*

If persecuted for Christs sake, meditate on *Mat. 5. 10. 1 Pet. 4. 12, 13, 14. Psal. 94. 12.*

If sick, and under tormenting pains, meditate on *Psal. 50. 15. Isa. 63. 9. Rom. 8. 28.*

If reproached, slandered, and falsely accused, meditate on *Mat. 10. 25. Mat. 5. 11, 12. Luke 6. 22, 23.*

If Satan tempts thee, and thou art not able to resist him, meditate on *Rom. 16. 20. 1 Cor. 10. 13. Gen. 3. 15. 1 John 3. 8.*

If thy corruptions be too strong for thee, meditate on *Rom. 6. 14. Mic. 7. 19.*

If God hides his face from thee, and thou sittest in darkness, and seeest no light, meditate on *Isa. 50. 10. Isa. 54. 7, 8.*

If ready to faint in waiting upon God, and in expecting the fulfilling of his promises, meditate on *Isa. 30. 18. Isa. 63. 3. Isa. 40. 28, 29, 30. Mal. 3. 1.*

If ready to dye, and full of fears and doubts, meditate on *1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. Hos. 13. 14. Rev. 14. 13. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. 2 Cor. 5. 1, 8.*

7. You

7. You must meditate on the variety of the promises, and their difference and distinction one from the other. The promises are like unto the stars in the firmament:

The seventh meditation, meditate on the variety of the Promises.

1. For their multitude, they are very many. The Scripture is bespangled with promises, as the Heavens are with stars. It were happy if the Saints would prove *spiritual Astronomers*, and make it their work to study the nature of these stars.

2. For their *Beauty, Excellency, and influence*. Every star is beautiful in its kind, and very useful and advantagious, so are the promises. And as the stars are most comfortable in the darkness of the night; so are the promises in the night of trouble and adversity.

3. And especially, for their *distinction and difference*. For one star differs from another in glory, 1 Cor. 15. 41. *There is one glory of the Sun, another of the Moon, another of the Stars.* So do the promises differ exceedingly one from another in beauty and excellency. Some are temporal, some spiritual, some of things that are eternal; Some are conditional, some absolute; Some are promises to those that have grace, some are promises of grace; Some are general, others particular; Some are Original, Fundamental, and Fountain-promises (as the promise of Jesus Christ, of God being our God, and of the Holy Ghost.) Others are *derivative, depending, and rivolet promises*, (as the promises of all outward comforts here, and of eternal life hereafter.) Now it is our duty to take notice of every Ray of Gold, to meditate upon all the promises, both *spiritual, temporal, and eternal*;
both

both *conditional*, and *absolute*; both of *grace*, and to *grace*; both *general*, and *particular*; but especially of the *Original* and *Fundamental Promises*, the *Fountain-promises*, from whence all others; as so many streams and rivolets, are deduced and derived.

The eight meditation meditate on the usefulness of the Promises.

8. You must meditate on the *usefulness*, and *profitableness* of the promises. I have already shewed you, that they are the *Conduits of grace and comfort*, that they have a *Soul-satisfying*, and a *Soul comforting power*. Give me leave to add, That the promises are

1. The *Breathings of Divine love and affection*.

2. The *Life and Soul of Faith*.

3. The *Anchor of Hope*.

4. The *Wings of Prayer*.

5. The *Foundation of Industry*.

6. The *Rays and Beams of the Son of Righteousness*; And upon all these accounts are very useful and advantageous.

The Promises are the breathings of Divine love.

1. They are the *breathings of Divine love and affection*. It is an Argument of Gods wonderful love to his Children, that he is pleased to enter into a Promise and Covenant to be their God, and to give them Christ, and in Christ all blessings here, and hereafter. We Read, *Gen. 17. 2, 3.*

when God told *Abraham*, that he would make a Covenant with him, he fell on his face as astonished at so great a mercy, and as thankfully acknowledging the goodness of God towards him. The like we read of *David*: When God by *Nathan* made

a promise to him, he goes into Gods House, and prays, *Who am I, and what is my House, that the Lord my God should do this! &c.* The promises are the Cabinets of the tender bowels of God, they contain the dearer and tender love of God towards his elect Children; God by promising makes himself a debtor to them. Now that God who is bound to none (no not to the Angels of Heaven) should enter into bonds, and bind himself to give grace and glory to his elect Children, this is love above expression. And there is nothing moved God to do this, but (as I have said) his free grace and mercy. For though God be now bound out of Justice, and faithfulness to fulfil his Promises, yet nothing moved him to make these promises, but his love and mercy, as David saith of what God had promised to him. *2 Sam. 7. 21. According to thine own heart (ex mero motu voluntatis) and according to thy Word, not for any thing in me, For what am I, O Lord! &c.* Thus you see how the promises are the *breathings of Divine love and affection*, and upon this account are they very useful and profitable. For love is loves Load stone; therefore the Apostle saith, *We love him, because he loved us first.* The sense of Gods love to us, will kindle a love in us to God. Even as the Beams of the Sun reflecting upon a Wall, heats those that walk by the Wall; So the beams of Gods love shining into our Souls, warms our hearts with the love of God. The love of God constrains us, as saith Paul, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* There is a compulsive and constraining power in love. What did not Jacob do for the love of Rachel? How was Mephibosheth affected with the love of David?

2 Sam.

2 Sam. 9. 8. It is our duty to love those that hate us; but not to love those that love us, is more than *heathenish and brutish*.

2. They are *the life and soul of Faith*.

The Promises are the life and soul of Faith.

Faith without a Promise to act upon, is as a Body without a Soul, as a *dead flower* which hath no *beauty or sweetness in it*; But Faith grounded upon the promises, will enable a Christian to advance in all manner of Holiness: What made *Abraham* forsake his *Country*, and his *Fathers House*, and go he knew not *whither*? Nothing moved him to this, but because God had promised to make him a great Nation, and he believed it. Of all graces, none so causal of Holiness as the grace of Faith: It is a *world-overcoming, heart-purifying, life-sanctifying, wonder-working Grace*; and therefore the Promises must needs be very useful, because they are the life and soul of faith.

3. They are the *Anchor of Hope*.

The Promises are the Anchor of Hope.

Heb. 6. 9.

Hope is called an *Anchor of the Soul*, both *sure and steadfast*; But the Promises are the *Anchor of Hope*. All Hope of Heaven, which is not founded upon a Promise, is *Presumption*, and not Hope. *Presumption* is when a man hopes to go to Heaven upon no ground, or upon an insufficient ground. But true hope is a Hope grounded upon a *Scripture-Promise*: And Hope bottomed upon *Divine-Promises*, will mightily avail unto purity and holiness. *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, lived as *Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, because they looked and hoped for a *City* which hath foundations: whose builder and maker is God. The Old Testa-

Heb. 11. 9,
10.

ment.

ment Saints would not accept deliverance upon sinful terms, because they hoped for a better Resurrection. Heb. 11. The Papists and Arminians are much mistaken in teaching, That the assurance of Salvation is an Enemy to godliness. The Scripture saith the quite contrary, 1 John 3. 3. He that hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. The true Hope of Heaven, will make us live Heavenly.

4. They are the *Wings of prayer*: prayer is a Divine Cordial to convey Grace from Heaven into our Souls: It is a Key to unlock the Bowels of Mercy, which are in God. The best way to obtain Holiness, is upon our Knees, the best posture to fight against the Devil, is upon our Knees: and therefore prayer is not put as a part of our *Spiritual Armour*, but added as that which must be an ingredient in every part, and which will make every part effectual. But now the promises are the *Wings of prayer*. Prayer without a promise, is as a Bird without Wings: And therefore we read 2 Chron. 20 8, 9. both of Jacob and Jehoshaphat, how they urged God in their prayer, with his promises. And certainly the prayers of the Saints winged with Divine promises, will quickly fly up to Heaven, and draw down Grace and Comfort into their Souls. And upon this account it is, that the promises are so useful to a Christian, because they are so helpful in prayer. When we pray, we must urge God with his promises, and say, Lord, hast thou not said, *Thou wilt circumcise our hearts to love thee, thou wilt subdue our sins, thou wilt give the Spirit to those that ask it?* Lord! Thou art

art faithful, fulfil these thine own promises, and we must remember this great Truth, *That the promises God makes to us, to mortifie our sins for us are greater helps against sin, than our promises to God to mortifie sin.* Many men in the day of their distress, vow and promise to leave sin, and fight against it in the strength of these promises, and instead of *Conquering* sin, are *Conquered* by sin. But if we fight against sin in the strength of Christ, and of his promises; if we urge God in prayer with his own Word, we shall at last get victory over it: For he hath said, *That sin shall not have dominion over us,* Rom. 6. 14.

5. They are the *Foundation of Industry.* The promises do not make men *lazy and idle*, as some scandalously say, but they are the ground of all true *labour and industry*; therefore the Apostles persuade us from the consideration of the promises, unto the study of soul-purification, to have our Conversation without covetousness; *to flee from Idolatry, and to separate our selves from sinful communion.* Divine promises are great encouragements unto spiritual diligence.

Object. *Though conditional promises be the foundation of Industry (because we cannot have the thing promised, unless we perform the conditions) yet absolute promises (say some) are foundations of laziness, and therefore they affirm, there are no absolute promises in Scripture.*

Answer.

Ans. Absolute Promises are made Foundations of Industry in Scripture, as well as Conditional: The Apostle exhorts us to *Work out our Salvation with fear and trembling, because it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.* And the reason is, because God performeth nothing which he promiseth, though never so absolutely, but in the diligent and conscientious use of the means on our part. God promiseth, *Ezek. 36. 26. to give us a new Heart and a new Spirit, &c.* but then he adds, verse 37. *I will yet for this, be inquired of by the House of Israel.*

Phil. 2. 12, 13.

6. They are *rayes and beams* (as one saith) of *Christ the Sun of Righteousness*, in whom they are founded and established. As all the Lines in a Circumference, though never so distant, carry a Man to one and the same Center; So all the Promises, carry us to *Christ the Center*. For the Promises are not made for any thing in us, nor have they any stability from us, but they are made in, and for Christ unto us, unto Christ in our behalf, and unto us, so far as we are members of Christ. Now Jesus Christ is the ground of all soul-purification, soul-consolation, and soul-salvation; And therefore I may safely conclude, that the promises are most singularly useful, and advantageous. And that it is the duty of all those that desire to live holily and comfortably, to consider and ponder the profitableness and beneficialness of the promises.

The Promises are the rays and beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Dr. Reynolds on the sinfulness of sin.

9. And

The ninth Meditation, meditate on the necessity of getting an interest in the promises.

Eph. 2. 12.

9. And lastly, you must meditate on the great necessity that lyeth upon all Men to get a Scripture-Interest in the Promises. This I add to awaken Christians to attend diligently to this Discourse about the promises, and to shew them the necessity of minding and of studying them. For he that hath no right to them, is in a faithless, hopeless, comfortless, desperate, and Damnable condition. All the happiness of a Christian both here and hereafter, consisteth especially in his Right and Title to the promises. The Scripture tells us in express words, that he that is a stranger from the promise, is without Christ, without God, without Hope. Sad is the condition of that Man, who hath no Interest in God, nor in Christ, and who is without hope: And such is the condition of him, who is a stranger to the promises; for all hope of Heaven, which is not bottomed upon a Promise, is presumption, and soul-detraction. All comfort and joy which is not grounded upon a promise, is soul-cousenage; and all faith not anchored upon a promise, is nothing else but flattery and soul-mockery. Consider this, you that are full of joy and comfort, and (as you say) relye upon Christ for Salvation: Tell me, what promise have you to build this faith, this hope, this comfort upon? For there are thousands that flatter themselves into Hell by a false hope of Heaven; thousands which promise to themselves to go to Heaven, but have no Promise for it from God. Such were the five foolish Virgins, such was the Church of Laodicea, such were

were they, *Matth. 7. 24. Hos. 8. 2, 3. Micha 3. 10, 11.* Remember this, and let it be daily in your thoughts: You that have not true right to the promises, *'your Faith is Faction, your Hope is Presumption, and your Joy is Delusion,* To be a stranger from the Promise, is to be without God, without Christ, and without Hope. So much for the second particular, viz. *Meditate on the Promises.*

The End of the Fourth Sermon.

RULES

RULES

FOR THE

RIGHT APPLICATION

OF THE

PROMISES.

SERMON V.

PSAL. 119. 92.

*Unless thy Law had been my Delights, I should
then have perished in mine Affliction.*

NOW I come to the third and last particular
He that would make the *Promises* as spiritual
bladders to keep him from drowning in the
deep waters of affliction, must not only make a
Catalogue of them, and meditate upon them, but
he

he must make *Application* of them to his own soul, as belonging to him in particular; He must (as it is said of the godly Patriarchs, *Heb. 11. 13.*) *be persuaded of them, and imbrace them;* he must hugg and kiss them as his ἀπολαύς. *rich portion, and glorious inheritance.*

And this is the chief of all: For no Man can receive any comfort from a promise, who is not able to make out his interest in that promise. As the life of a Sermon is in the Application of it unto our selves; so the life of a Promise is in the Appropriation of it. *Quid est Deus, si non est meus?* What am I the better (saith *Origen*) that Christ took upon him the flesh of a Virgin, if he took not my flesh? What was the great Prince the better for the miraculous plenty in *Samaria*, when the Prophet told him that he should *see it with his Eyes, but not eat of it?* As the Man, who when he was ready to be drowned, saw a Rain-bow (which was a sign that the World should never be again drowned) said, *Quod mihi proderit hac Iris, si ego peream?* What am I the better for this Rain-bow, if I perish? So may I say, what is a Man the better for the Rich Mine of Treasure contained in the promises, if he hath no share in it?

There are three sorts of Professors of Religion.

1. Some lay claim to the Promises, when they have no right to them; such are your presumptuous sinners, who take it for granted, that the promises belong to them, who presume themselves into Hell by a false hope in the promises; who make a Feather bed of the promises, upon which they sleep securely in sin: As *Thrasylus* (a mad Athenian) laid claim to every Ship that came to *Athens*, though he had right to none: So a presumptuous sinner

finner lays a claim to every promise, though he hath right to none; he enlargeth them beyond their bounds, and maketh the conditional promises to be absolute, and such as belong only to those that are in Christ, to belong to him, though he be not in Christ: He sucks the *poison* of sin, and security, out of the *sweet Flowers* of the *Promises*.

2. Some have an interest in the *promises*, and know their interest; these live in Heaven while they are upon Earth, these *rejoice in tribulation*, and are *more than Conquerours* over the greatest afflictions; these are secure from perishing in the day of distress. That man, who taking the Bible into his hand, can say upon right grounds, *All the promises in this Book are my portion*, and I have a right and title to them, this man is *happy above expression*.

3. Some have an interest in the *promises*, but do not know their interest, and therefore dare not (in the hour of trouble) apply them for their *supportation and consolation*. Such are your *broken-hearted, wounded, distressed, and deserted Christians*: Such can receive no comfort from the Promises in the day of affliction. When they begin to apply them for their support, the Devil suggesteth to them, and their own doubting Hearts tell them, that they mis-apply them, and that they belong not to them. When a godly Minister (whose office is to *speake a word in season to those that are weary*, Isa. 50. 4.) indeavours by the Application of the Promises to comfort them, their *Souls refuse to be comforted*, they exclude themselves from having a right to Christ, and his *promises*, though Christ would not have them excluded. They groundlessly fear that their names are written in
the

the *black Book of Reprobation*, and that all the curses of the Law are their portion; hence it is that they live so uncomfortably, and disconsolately in the time of affliction. Now then for the help of such persons, who have a true title to the promises, but know it not, who *walk in darkness, and see no light*, who believe they are Hypocrites, when they are not, and that they are not in Christ, when they are; (that I may be Gods instrument to inable such to make Application of the precious promises unto their own Souls in particular, in the hour of trouble, for their everlasting supportation and consolation) I shall lay down these ensuing Rules, and Directions.

Rule I.

I. Whosoever in a Gospel sense doth obey the *commanding word of God*, hath a real interest in the *promising Word of God*. Though thou canst not perfectly obey the Will of God, yet if thou dost *truly desire* and *industriously endeavour* to obey it in all things; If God hath written his Law in thy Heart, and given thee a Gospel-frame, inclining thee to the obedience of all his Commandments sincerely, though not perfectly; this is an infallible evidence; that thou hast a right and portion in all the Promises. This is that which God saith, *If you will obey my voice in deed, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure, &c.* Exod. 19. 5. If ye will obey my voice indeed, and not only in word, and in shew, but in deed, and in truth. Thus Jer. 7. 5, 7. *If ye thoroughly amend your ways, if ye thoroughly execute Judgment, &c* then.

The first Rule for the Right Application of the Promises.

then will I cause you to dwell in this place, &c. If ye thoroughly amend, &c. not only in some things, but in all things; not only outwardly, but inwardly also. This Rule is expressly delivered by the Apostle, 1 Tim. 4. 8. *Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.* If thou be'st a Godly man in a Gospel-sense, that is, one who truly and sincerely endeavoureth to be Godly; If thou makest Gods Will, thy Rule to live by, and not thy own; Gods Glory thy end, and not thine own carnal interest; Gods Love thy Principle; If thy Rules, Aims, and Principles be godly, all the Promises of this Life, and of the Life to come, belong to thee. It is worth the observing, that all the Promises of Life and Salvation are conditional: Happiness is intailed upon Holiness, Glory upon Grace. You shall read in Scripture of the blessings of the Covenant, and of the Bond of the Covenant; of the blessings of the Promise, and of the condition of the Promises. If ever you would assure your selves of the interest in the blessings of the Covenant, you must try your selves by your sincere performance of the condition. Thus Christ is promised to none but such as believe; pardon of sin, to none but such as Repent; and Heaven to none but such as persevere in well doing. Tell me then Canst thou say, as in Gods presence, that thou hast respect to all Gods Commandments, (though thou failest in ail, yet thou hast a respect to all) that thou obeyest God in deed, and in truth, and that thou sincerely labourest to be godly? This is a certain sign, that all the Promises are thy portion; but you that are ungodly, and do not thoroughly amend your ways, you that slight, undervalue, and despise the commanding Word, you have no part, no portion in the promising Word. But

But it may be a distressed Christian (though without just cause) will say, that he is afraid that he doth not sincerely obey the *commanding Word*, and therefore dares not apply to himself the *promising word*; wherefore I add,

Rule 2.

2. *The more thou art afraid, lest thou shouldest have no right to the promises, the more right thou hast (in all probability) to them.* This I speak only to the distressed Christian; not that I commend his fear: But this I say, This fear which thou art possessed withal, is a probable sign that thou hast an interest in the promises. For a presumptuous sinner never doubts of his right to them, but takes it as a maxim not to be denied, that they belong to him. It is a comfortable saying of Mr. Greenhams, *When thou hearest the promises, and art in a cold sweat, and hast a fear and a trembling seizing upon thee, lest they should not belong to thee, doubt not, but that they do belong to thee*; For Christ hath said, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* And the Prophet *Isaiab* calls upon those who are of a fearful heart, *to be strong, and fear not*; and tells us for our comfort, that God will look with an Eye of favour upon him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at his Word.

The second Rule for the Right Application of the Promises.

Mat. 11. 28.

Isa. 35. 4.

Isa. 66. 2.

Rule 3.

3. *The more sensible thou art of thine* The third Rule for the right Application of the Promises.

own unworthiness to lay hold upon the promises, the more thou art fitted and qualified to lay hold upon them. For the promises are (as I have shewed) the fruit of Free grace. Nothing moved God to enter into Covenant with his people, and thereby to become their Debtor, but his free Love. Free

Sola misericordia deducit Deum ad homines, & sola misericordia deducit homines ad Deum. Grace brought Christ down from Heaven, and it is Free Grace must carry us up to Heaven, Christ himself is called, the gift of God John 4. 10. Moses tells the Israelites, Deut. 7. 7, 8. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor chuse you, because you were more in number than any people, &c. but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the Oath which he had sworn unto your Fathers, hath the Lord brought you

out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you? &c. God doth not love us, because we are worthy of his love, but because he loves us, therefore he makes us worthy. We must not bring worthiness to Christ, but fetch worthiness from Christ. And therefore, if thou beest sensible of thine own nothingness, emptiness, and unworthiness, lay hold upon that excellent promise, Blessed

Mat. 5. 3. *are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Blessed are those

who are sensible of their spiritual wants, for to them belongs the Kingdom of Heaven, as certainly as if they were already in it.

Rule 4.

The fourth Rule for the right Application of the Promises.

4. Study thy Interest in the main

and

and fundamental promise, and that will help thee to make out thy Interest in all the other; *The main and fundamental promise, is the promise of Christ*; For all promises, whether 2 Cor. I. 20. Spiritual or Temporal, are made to us in and through him. God hath promised, never to leave us, nor forsake us, and that all things shall work together for our good; that is, if we be in Christ. God hath said, all things are ours, whether Paul, or Apollos, whether life 1 Cor. 3. or death, whether things present, or things to come; but it is with this Proviso, if we be *Christ's*: Whosoever takes any comfort from any Temporal Promise, and is not in Christ, doth but delude and cheat himself. This then is thy work O Christian; study thy interest in Christ, make out that, and make out all. If no Interest in Christ, no Interest in the Promises; If an Interest in Christ, an Interest in the Promises; let this then be thy daily business to make it out to thy Soul, that *Christ* is thine.

Quest. How shall I be able to do this?

Ans. For this purpose you must diligently study three things.

1. The *Universality* of the promise of Christ.
2. The *Freeness* of it.
3. The *Condition* upon which he is tendred.

Three things to be studied in order to the making out of our Interest in Christ.

1. The *Universality* of the promise of Christ. Christ Jesus with all his benefits is promised to every one who is willing to lay hold on him, as he is tendred in the Gospel. The Apo-

First, The universality of the promise of Christ.

Mark 16.
15, 16.

files are commanded to go into all the World, and to preach the Gosp. l to every Creature; he that believeth, and is Baptized, shall be saved, &c. If thou hast a Heart to believe, be thy sins never so great, it is for the Honour of Jesus Christ, to pardon them. As the Sea covers great Rocks, as well as

Magnus de
cælo venit
medicus,
quia mag-
nus in ter-
ra jacebat
ægrotoſus.

small, so the Mercy of God in Christ will pardon great sins, as well as little. It will cost Christ as little to wash away the guilt of great sins, as of small. Christ is a great Physician. And David prayeth, pardon my Iniquity, for it is great, Psalm 25. 11. Though thy sins be never so bloodily circumstantiated, though never

Aug.

so often reiterated, though thou beest never so loathsome, yet if thou canst believe, There is a Fountain opened to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem; for sin, and for uncleanness; and therefore let no Man exclude himself from a right to Christ, who is willing to take Christ upon Christs Terms. He that excludes himself, offers the greatest injury Imaginable.

First, Unto Jesus Christ, for he makes him a Lyar: Christ hath said, If any Man Joh. 6. 37. come to me, I will in no wise cast him out: And he saith, Christ will cast me out, although I do come to him.

Secondly, Unto his own Soul. For he necessitates himself unto Damnation; for Christ hath said expressly, He that believeth not, shall be damned.

Object. But I am afraid that I am a Reprobate, and

and that God hath excluded me from having any Interest in Christ.

Ans. Who told thee so? It is one great sign thou art not, because the Devil would perswade thee that thou art. But however, *Secret things belong to God, but those things which are revealed to us, and our Children.* God hath kept the *black Book of Reprobation secret*: He openeth the *whole Book of Election* to some of his Children, but he keeps his *black Book* unrevealed. It is a sin for any Man to think himself a Reprobate (unless he can prove that he hath sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost) for this thought would hinder him from the use of means for his salvation, and cause him to despair, which is a sin of the first magnitude, and therefore take heed of complementing thy self into Hell by a sinful modesty, in refusing to believe in Christ: Take heed of dallying or delaying in the great work of *laying hold on Christ, upon Christs Terms.* Remember, God excludes none from Christ, but such as exclude themselves by unbelief. And remember, *Whosoever believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

2. You must study the *Freeness* of the promise of Christ. God promi-
seth Jesus Christ freely, *Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no Money; Come ye, buy, and eat, yea come, buy, Wine and Milk without Money, and without price, &c.* Christ is offered in the Gospel, *sine pretio, sine merito, sine motivo, without price, without merit, and without any motive inducing on our parts.* There-

Study the
freeness of
the Pro-
mise of
Christ.

fore the Holy Ghost saith, *Whosoever* Rev. 22. 17. *will, let him take of the Water of life* Isa. 55. 1. *freely.* Let not then thy undeserved-

ness hinder thee from laying hold upon Christ, as thy Portion. Say not, I am not worthy that Christ should own me. Christ will own thee, not because thou art *Worthy*, but because *he delights in Mercy*, Micha 7. 18. Say not, I am not humbled enough, and therefore I dare not lay hold upon Christ. For humiliation is not required to make us precious to Christ but to make Christ precious to us; and if thou beest so far humbled, as to be willing to take Christ upon Christ's Terms, thou art *humbled enough, unto Divine acceptance*, though not unto *Divine Satisfaction*. Every stung Israelite, who was inabled to look up to the *Brazen Serpent*, was healed, though he was not stung to that proportion that another Israelite was.

Study the condition upon which Christ is Promised. 3. You must study the condition upon which Christ is promised. It is certain, Christ is not tendered absolutely, without any condition. Christ is not offered to a proud sinner, resolving so to continue, or to a drunkard, resolving to persevere in his drunkenness. Those Texts which declare the *Freeness* of the offer of Christ, do also mention a condition to be performed by those that will have him, Isa 55. 1. Rev. 22. 15. In both places the condition of thirsting is expressed. *Let him that is a thirst come. Ho every one that thirsteth.*

Quest. Doth not the mentioning of a condition, take away the freeness of the tender of Christ?

Ans^r.

Ans. By no means. The reason is, because this very condition is the free gift of God. The Apostle saith, Rom. 4. 16. *Therefore it is of Faith, that it might be by Grace.* The condition of Faith doth not make the offer of Christ, not to be of grace; but therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace; for as Christ, so also faith is *the Gift of God.* We do not preach conditions unto Justification in a *Papish* sense (as if they merited, out of congruity, the pardon of sin) or in an *Arminian* sense (as if we could do any thing by our free-will (without grace) to dispose our selves unto Justification) but in a *Scripture* sense we say, that all those on whom God intends to bestow Christ freely, he freely openeth their Eyes to see their undone condition out of Christ, he humbles them under the sense of their sad condition, and out of his free mercy inables them by faith to lay hold upon Christ and to accept of him upon his own Terms. Faith is not the *cause* for which, but the *cause without which*, God will not give us Christ.

Quest. But what is the condition upon which Christ is promised?

Ans. There is (if I may so speak) *Conditio præparans*, & *disponens*, and *conditio applicans*, the condition required to the preparing and disposing us for an interest in Christ, and the Condition applying Christ to us, and bringing him into our possession.

1. The condition required to the disposing, preparing, and fitting us for an Interest in Christ. And this is the sight of our sins, the sense of them, and a real willingness to part with them. There is no Man qualified according to the Gospel, to rest upon Christ for pardon of his sins, who is not

really willing to part with them. And no Man will be really willing to part with his sins (which he naturally loves as himself) unless he see the sinfulness, and cursedness of them, and feels in some measure the smart of them. The Woman who had the bloody Issue, never thought of coming to Christ, till all her Money was spent in vain among other Physitians. The Prodigal Child would never have returned to his Father, had he not seen himself utterly undone by wandering from him.

2. The condition applying Christ to us, and bringing him into our possession. This is Faith, which therefore is the proper condition of the Gospel, upon which Christ is tendered. Now this Faith, is not a bare receiving, and taking of Christ : For there are many who take him, and mistake him. (There is no Man but is willing when he is dying, to take Christ, as the Men of the old World were willing to go into the Ark when the flood came) But this taking, and receiving of Christ (if it be right) hath six Properties.

1. It is a receiving of Christ with Right, in all his appurtenances, Christ and receiving of disgrace, and reproach and poverty ; Christ and his Cross : There are many who would be glad of Christ, but they will not take up his Cross. They would take Christ down from the Cross, (as Joseph of Arimathea did) and leave the Cross behind them. But he that takes Christ aright, will be as willing to wear a Crown of thorns, for his sake, as a Crown of Gold.

2. It is a receiving of Christ in all his Offices, as our King, Priest, and Prophet. A true Believer is as willing to receive Christ into his Soul, as he is that

Application of the Promises.

that Christ should receive him into Heaven; he is as willing to have Christ Reign over him, as he is to Reign with Christ in Heaven. He desires not only to be *saved*, but to be *healed by Christ*.

3. It is a receiving of Christ into every room of the Soul; for Christ will come in every room, or into never a room. A true Believer opens every door unto Christ; he gives him the Lock and Key of the whole Man, and desires that he would come and reside in every room.

4. It is a receiving of Christ, and him only. For Christ must Rule alone, or not at all. An Hypocrite would compound with Christ, and together with the false Mother, divide the Child; but a true Believer saith with the Prophet, O Lord our God! Other Lords besides thee have had Dominion over us; but now by thee only will we make mention of thy Name. And with the true Mother he will give the whole to God.

5. It is a receiving of Christ in Health, as well as in Sickness; in prosperity, as well as in adversity; in Youth, as well as in Old Age; in Life, as well as in Death. Most people make use of Christ, merely as a shelter against a storm, for their own ends (as the Athenians did of Themistocles) and when the storm is over, forsake him: most people fly to Christ in their Distress, as Joab did to the Horns of the Altar, and when they can serve the Devil no longer, then they begin to think of serving of God: But a true Believer will give his best Days to God, as well as his worst; he desires not only to dye in Christ, but to live for Christ, he receives Christ in health, &c.

6. It is a receiving of Christ, not only for an Hour, or a Day, or a Year, but for ever. True Faith

Faith marries the Soul to Christ, never to part. Once a Member of Christ, for ever a Member.

Now there is no Child of God, of what size soever (though he be but as a Toe in Christs Body) who cannot truly say, that he is willing to receive Jesus Christ with all these Properties, to receive all Christ, with all his Appurtenances, and to receive him only in every room, in Health, and for ever. And therefore let not the Devil, or thy melancholick fancy, keep thee off from believing that Christ Jesus is thy portion, and that thou hast an interest in the main and Fundamental Promise, and by that in all other. Do to Christ, as the

Shunamitish Woman did to the Prophet, lay fast hold on him; and suffer not the Devil to cause thee to let go thy hold. Oh that there might

be this Day a Blessed and Happy Marriage between Jesus Christ, and every Distressed Christian.

Object. But suppose I am willing to take Christ upon Christs Terms, can I rest assured that Christ will receive me?

Ans. Yes, doubtless. For he hath said, he will; and he is truth

itself, and cannot lye. Indeed a poor

wounded sinner will sometimes confess that he is willing with all his

Heart to receive Christ upon his own Terms; but he is afraid lest Christ should refuse to receive him. But this is a needless fear: For

Christ will in no wise refuse those that come to him. To as many as receive him, to all these he will give power

to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name. He that believ-

eth

eth, hath everlasting Life, and shall never come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death to Life. So much for the fourth Rule.

If these Rules and Directions already named, will not inable thee to apply the promises, so as to keep thee from perishing in the day of Distress; Let me add,

Rule 5.

5. If thou canst not lay hold upon the promises made to those who are in the highest Form in Christs School, lay hold upon the promises made to those who are in the lower Forms. In Christs School there are divers sorts of Scholars, some are in the High Form, some in the Middle, some in the lowest, some are Babes in Christs School, some are grown Christians, some are as tall Cedars, some are as low shrubs. Now you must know that it is our duty to labour to be of the Highest Form. He that saith he hath grace enough, hath grace little enough. He that stints himself in his indeavours after grace, never had true Grace. We must labour to be perfect, as God is perfect. But yet you must also know, that he that is a real Scholar in Christs School, is in an happy condition, though he be not the best Scholar. And that it is our Duty so to eye the eminent graces, which are in others, as to be thereby incited to a further progress in grace, but not so to be thereby Disheartened and Discouraged. There are many Distressed Christians, like to those who gaze so long upon the brightness of the Sun, that when they come in their Houses, they cannot see at all, they pore so much upon the transcendent Excellen-

The fifth Rule for the right Application of the promises.

Qui dixit
fufficit,
deficit.
Non pro-
gredi, est
regredi.

Excellencies which are in their Brethren, that they are stark blind in their own concernments, and cannot see any grace in themselves, and hereupon, are apt to conclude, that they are out of Gods favour. But this is a *non sequitur*. The Foot must not say, that it is no part of the Body, because it is not so eminent a part as the Head or Heart. We must rather say with the Martyr, *Blessed be God that I am a member in Christs Body, though but the weakest and lowest*. We must not rest satisfied with being *low Christians*; but yet we must not therefore say, *we are no Christians*. And when we are under great Tribulations and Temptations, if we cannot apply to our selves for our comfort, those promises which are made to eminent Saints of the highest form, let us apply those which are made unto true Saints, though to such who are the lowest of the lowest form; and hereby we shall (through Gods blessing) find our souls marvellously supported and comforted. As

Mar. 5. 3. for example, Christ hath said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*. And therefore though thou art not *rich in Grace*, yet if *poor in Spirit*, thou art blessed. Christ saith, *Blessed*

Mat. 5. 4. *are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted*. Though thou canst not live without sin, yet if a mourner for thine own, and other Mens sins, thou art blessed.

Christ saith, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after Righteousness, &c.* Though thou findest an exceeding great want of Righteousness in thee, yet if thou hunrest and thirstest after it, thou art blessed.

Christ

Christ saith, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* This Text is an

Alabaſter box full of precious conſolation. If thy ſins be a burthen to thee, Chriſt will give thee reſt; if thou carryeſt them about thee, not as a Golden Chain about thy Neck, but as an Iron Chain about thy feet; if thou beeſt heavy laden with them, Chriſt will take them off thy ſhoulders, and put them upon his.

Chriſt ſaith, *That he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax, till he ſend forth Judgment and Victory.* If thou haſt grace but as a ſmoking flax, Chriſt will not quench it, but aſſiſt it, till it come to a greater flame.

Chriſt ſaith, *That the whole have no need of the Phyſitian, but they that are ſick. And that he came not to call the Righteous, but ſinners to Repentance.*

If thou art a ſin-ſick-ſinner, thy name is in Chriſts commiſſion, he came to ſave thee.

Chriſt ſaith, *The Son of Man is come to ſave that which was loſt.* If thou apprehendeſt thy ſelf to be in a loſt condition, thou art amongſt the number of thoſe whom Chriſt came to ſave.

The Apoſtle ſaith, *There is no condemnation to thoſe who are in Chriſt, who walk not after the fleſh, but after the Spirit.* Though thou haſt much fleſh in thee, and art ſometimes overtaken with ſin, yet if thou doſt not walk after the fleſh, as a ſervant after his Maſter, if thou walkeſt after the Spirit, there is no condemnation to thee.

The

Rules for the Right

The Apostle saith, *If we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* If we confess our sins, out of a detestation of sin, with bleeding hearts, and a sincere purpose of forsaking them, God is bound by virtue of his Promise to forgive us, else he were unfaithful.

The Apostle saith, *That he that hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the Day of Jesus Christ:* And therefore if thou hast Truth and Grace, though but as a grain of Mustard-seed, do not doubt, but that God in the diligent use of means, will enable thee to persevere.

I might add. *Neb. 1. 11.* where God promiseth to be attentive to the Prayers of those who desire to fear his Name. And *Isa. 26. 11. Isa. 26. 3. Isa. 65. 1. Isa. 55. 1. Rev. 22. 15. John 6. 37.* But I forbear.

Rule 6.

If thou canst not apply to thy self the sixth Rule for the Right Application of the Promises, for thy comfort in affliction, the conditional Promises, lay hold upon the absolute Promises. I have formerly told you, that there are some Promises conditional, others absolute, some to Grace, others of Grace, some to those that are Godly, others to make us Godly: God hath not only promised to pardon those that repent, but to give Repentance; not only to justify those that believe, but to give us to believe; not only to give Heaven to those that love

love him, but to give us grace to love him; not only to save those that persevere, but to enable us to persevere: And therefore if thou canst not lay hold upon the Promises to those that *are godly*; apply those which are made to make us *godly*. If not those which are made to those who *repent, believe and persevere*, apply those wherein God promiseth to give us to *repent, believe, and persevere*. If not the conditional, lay hold upon the absolute.

There are these differences and agreements, between conditional and absolute Promises.

I. For Conditional Promises.

1. All Promises of *Life and Salvation* are *Conditional*.

2. *Conditional Promises*, are the fruit of *Free-grace* as well as *Absolute*. It is *Free-grace* which enableth us to perform the *Conditional*, and *Free-grace*, which moved God to promise such great mercies upon such Conditions.

3. They are the fruit of *Rich-grace*, and *Rare-mercy*, as well as *Absolute-promises*.

4. They are of great use to *quicken a lazy Christian*, and to *incourage him to diligence*; for no Man can obtain the *blesting promised*, but he that performs the *condition enjoined*.

5. They are *rare Touchstones* to try our interest in the promises; For he that neglects to perform the *condition*, cannot challenge an interest in the *blesting promised* upon the performing of it.

2. For

2. For Absolute Promises.

1. Though promises to *grace* be conditional, yet promises of *grace* are absolute, and are made by God unto Christ in the behalf of his elect Children. according to that of *David, Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine Inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the Earth for thy possession.*

2. There are no promises so Absolute, as to exclude all Endeavours on our part. God will do the things promised for us, but by us. We work, but it is God who worketh all our works in us, and for us.

3. Absolute promises are foundations of industry, as well as conditional. The truth of this I made out in the former Sermon.

4. Absolute promises are demonstrative arguments of special election, and of the perseverance of the Saints. There are some peculiar ones to whom God hath promised (in the use of the means) absolutely to write his Law in their Hearts, to cause them to walk in his ways, to give them infallibly, and infustrably, repentance, faith, and perseverance. The promise of the first Grace, and of the crowning Grace is absolute. And therefore the Doctrine of Special Election, and of Perseverance, must needs be true.

5. Absolute promises are mighty helps to wounded Consciences, and rare cordials for fainting and despairing Christians. When thou art in the dark, and seeest no light, fly from the conditional promises, to the absolute; say, Lord, thou hast not only promised to give pardon to those who repent, but thou hast exalted Christ for to give Repentance: Thou
hast

hast not only promised to justifie those who believe, but to give Grace to believe. Lord fulfil thine own Promise unto thy servant, &c.

Object. *All my fear is that these absolute promises do not belong to me.*

Ans^r. Take heed of making desperate conclusions against thy self. Say as the King of Nineveh, *Who knoweth but God may turn and have mercy?* Exclude not thy self; Neither Man nor Angel can say, *thou art excluded.* No man ought to believe himself to be a Reprobate, (as I have shewed) these promises belong to all that can lay hold on them as they are tendered. As the Brazen Serpent belonged to all those who were able to look upon it; so do these promises to all that can by Faith look up, that they may be healed. Say as the four Lepers in another case, *If I go on 2 Kings 7.* in unbelief, I am certainly damned. And therefore I will venture upon Christ, I will fly to this Ark, and if I perish, I will perish believing.

If these directions will not suffice to comfort thee in the day of adversity, let me add,

Rule 7.

All promises made in Scripture to the Saints in general, are applicable to every Saint in particular. God promiseth to Solomon, 1 Kin. 8. 37, 40. And Jehoshaphat applied this to his own particular condition, 2 Chron. 20. 9. God promiseth to the Saints in General, that he will give them Grace and Glory,	The seventh Rule for the right Application of the Promises.
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that

that he will *with-hold no good thing from them*, that they shall *want nothing that is good*,
 Psal. 48.10. and that *all ourward blessings shall be*
 Psal. 43.10. *added to them*. Now there is no
 Mat. 6. 33. Saint but he may as justly lay hold
 upon those promises, as if his name
 were named in them: And the reason is, because
 all the promises do meet in Christ, as all Lines in
 a Center. And every Saint hath all Christ. And there-
 fore promises made to those that are in Christ, be-
 long to all that are in Christ.

Rule 8.

The eight Rule for the right Application of the promises.

All promises made to particular Saints are applicable to all Saints in the same condition. God promiseth to Joshua, that he *would never leave him, nor forsake him*. This is applied by the Apostle for the comfort of every Saint. Christ tells Peter, Luke
 Josh. 5. 22. 32. *I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*. This is applicable to every Saint: Christ prayeth for thee and me, and therefore he adds, *When thou art converted, strengthen thy Brethren*. Therefore the Apostle Paul saith, *That God comforted him in his tribulation, that he might be able to comfort those who are in trouble by the comfort wherewith he was comforted*. And the Apostle James propounds the example of the Prophets in general, and of Job in particular, to persuade unto patience in affliction. And therefore when thou art in any strait, consider what God hath promised unto others, in thy condition, and what God hath

hath done to them, he will do to thee, for he is unchangeable. And say not, If I were a *Paul*, a *Peter*, or a *Job*, God would do to me, as he did to them; but I am a poor, weak, unworthy creature, not worthy to be named that day in which these are named. But consider, If thou beest a member of Christs Body (though but as the Toe) Christ will have a care of thee. If a child of God (though but weak and sickly) thy Heavenly Father will provide for thee. A Father is tender of every child; and a man of every member of his body; so will God be of all those who belong to him, though but Babes in Christ.

Rule 9.

The promises of the Gospel are all concatenated. If thou hast a true right to any one promise to which Heaven is annexed, thou hast a right to all the other. As the Commandements of God are chained together (he that breaks one, breaks all, according to that Rule, *Whatsoever is done for God, is done equally.*) And as the Graces of God are linked together (and therefore Heaven is sometimes promised to our grace, because he that hath one saving grace, hath all) so also are the promises joyned together, he that hath a right to one, hath a right to all: For they are all but one, and the same for substance. They are all the fruit of the same free love in God; They are all the branches of the same Covenant of Grace. (And therefore if thou hast a right to the Covenant, thou hast a right to

The ninth Rule for the Right Application of the promises.

Quicquid propter Deum fit, æqualiter fit.
Mat. 5.3.8.

all

all the promises) they all carry us to Christ, and meet in Christ, and are in him *Yea*, and in him *Amen*; and therefore if thou hast a right to Christ, thou hast a right to all.

This is a point of *singular comfort in the worst of Days and Dangers*. For sometimes a child of God under great Afflictions, can lay hold upon one promise, and not upon another, and some can apply those which others cannot. and others those which they cannot: Let all such know for their great comfort, That he that hath right to one *branch of the Covenant*, hath right to all. He that hath let fall a Chain of Gold; consisting of divers links, into the water, if he can catch hold upon any one of the links, he will easily get out the *whole chain*. The promises are like to a Golden chain with divers links, lay hold upon one aright, and this will assure thee of thy interest in all the rest. I have known many (yea, very many) who have dyed with a great deal of comfort from the Application of that one Text, *1 Joh. 3. 14. unto their own condition, We know that we have passed from Death unto Life, because we love the Brethren*. When all other evidences failed them, and all other Texts of Scripture afforded them no comfort; here they anchored, here they found rest for their Souls: They blessed God that they could say, that they *loved the Brethren*, and loved them, *not for any outward respects*, but because of the *Image of God in them*, and they loved them when-poor, as well as when rich; and the more they had of God, the more they loved them; and they loved them, even when they were reproved by them of their faults. And upon this one plank they swam safely and comfortably unto the *Heaven of Eternal Happiness*.

Rule 10.

If thy condition be so sad, and thy melancholy so excessive, that thou canst not lay hold upon any promise, yet notwithstanding look towards it: Say as *Jonah*, when he was in the Whales belly, *Jonah 2. 4.* Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight, yet I will look again towards thy Holy Temple. The Temple was a type of Christ. Though thou canst not apply Christ to thy Soul for thy comfort, yet look towards him; and if thou canst not come to him, he will come to thee: If thou canst not apprehend him, he will apprehend thee; As the Load-stone will draw the Iron, though the Iron cannot draw the Load-stone; so will Christ (thy Heavenly Load-stone) draw thee to the promise, though thou canst not draw thy self to it. No Man can come to me (saith Christ) except the Father draw him: Pray therefore with the Church, *Cant. 1. 4.* Draw me, and we will run after thee.

The tenth Rule for the Right Application of the Promises.

Psal. 3. 12.

John 6. 44.

Rule 11.

Pray unto God to give the Spiritual Eyes, to behold thy interest in the promises: For as it is God who makes them, so it is only he who can irradiate them, and open thy eyes to see thy right in them. It is with promises (as I have said) as with Chapters and Sermons. A Man may read

The eleventh Rule for the Right Application of the promises.

a Chapter, and hear a Sermon, and tast no sweetness in them at one time, and at another time taste much sweetness in them, as God is pleased to cooperate with the Reading of the one, and Hearing of the other. So it is with the

Psal. 133. promises, and therefore pray unto God to *lighten thine eyes, that thou sleep*

Rev. 3. 18. *not the sleep of Death.* Pray unto Christ to *anoint thine eyes with his Spiritual eye-salve.* And to cause thee to hope in his word of promise; according to that excellent

Psal. 49. prayer of David, *Remember the Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* It is God must

cause us to hope and trust in his promises, or else we shall never be able. God hath given thee eyes to see thy misery; O pray for eyes to see his mercy. The Church of *Laodicea* wanted

Rev. 3. 16. eyes to see her misery; *She was miserable, and naked, and knew it not.*

Thou hast eyes to see thy undone condition out of Christ; pray for eyes to behold the riches of mercy that are in Christ, and his willingness to receive all that come to him.

Rule 12.

Pray unto God, not only to give the *Spiritual eyes*, to see thy interest in the promises, but a *Spiritual hand*, to enable thee to apply them to thine own Soul in particular. By this *Spiritual Hand*, I mean, *A Christ appropriating Faith.* Justifying Faith is (as it were) the *hand of the Soul*, by which we *appropriate Christ*, and all the promises,

as belonging to us in particular. Now *Faith is the gift of God. Pray for the Spirit of his Faith.* And for your encouragement, consider, that the Spirit is called, *The promise of the Father, and that Holy Spirit of promise:* And God hath promised to give the Spirit to those who ask for it; *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* The Office of the Holy Spirit is first to *seal grace,* and then to *seal to grace:* First, the Spirit sanctifieth us; then it witnesseth to our spirits, that we are sanctified. Pray therefore unto God, that he would not only work grace in you, but witness unto the Grace, which he hath wrought. Pray for the sanctifying and sealing work of the Spirit. That he would not only fit you to have an interest in the promises, but assure you of your interest in them.

Ephes. 2.8.

Acts 1.4.

Eph. 1.13.

Luk. 11.13.

Eph. 1.14.

Rule 13.

Study thy interest in the promises in the time of health, and outward prosperity; For I find by experience, that a child of God (under outward Affliction, or Divine desertion, or extreme melancholly) is many times like a Man in the dark. A Man in the dark cannot (though never so learned) read in a Book of the clearest print, or fairest characters: he cannot (though never so active) undertake any thing of weight. No more can

The 13.

Rule for

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on of the

Promises.

a child of God in the *hour of Distress*, read his Evidences for Heaven, much less study to find out Evidences; he looks upon all the promises *with a black pair of Spectacles*, and wants light to see his

interest in them, When Zion was in distress, she said, *God had forsaken her, and her Lord had forgotten her.*

Isa. 49. 14. When David was persecuted by Saul, he said in his haste, *All Men were liars,*

Ps. 116. 11. even Samuel himself, who had told him that God would bestow the Kingdom on him:

Psal. 31. 22. He said in haste he *was cut off from before Gods eyes.* Thus did Haman.

Psa. 88. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Christ himself cryed out, when he was upon the Cross, with a loud voice, *My God, my God, why hast*

thou forsaken me? As Men in Agues and Feavers, are not fit judges of meats and drinks (whether they be good or bad) because their pallats are out of taste. So a *Distressed Christian* (when under extream melancholly, divine desertion, or some great affliction) is no fit Judge, at such a time of his interest in the promises. And therefore my advice is, *Make out thy interest in time of prosperity, and live upon it in time of adversity. Make, and read over thy Evidences for Heaven in time of Health, and learn them by Heart, that when thou comest into a dark condition, thou mayest neither have them to make, or to read.* Do as Tamar did, Gen. 38. 18, 25. When Judah her Father in Law, lay with her, she took as a pledge, his *signet, bracelets and staffe.* And afterward when she was in great distress, and ready to be burnt as a Harlot, she then brought her *staff and signet, and bracelets,* and said: *By the Man whose these are, am I with Child;* and thereby she saved her life. So must you do. In time of health,
study

study thy Interest in the Promises, and in time of sickness, live upon what thou hast studyed, then bring forth thy *staff* and *bracelets*, &c. then produce thy Evidences, and make use of them, as spiritual Butteresses to keep thee from falling into despair.

I knew a very Godly Woman (not unknown to many here) who in her life time had taken a great deal of pains to compose, and write down her *Evidences* for Heaven, and who also kept a *Diary* of her life, and wrote down how she spent every

Mrs. Dig-
gons dwell-
ling with
Mrs. More
in Alder-
manbury.

day; when she lay upon her death-bed, it pleased God to with-draw himself from her, for a while, and to let the Devil loose, who tempted her to despair, told her she was an *Hypocrite*, a *Formalist* and that she had no true grace in her. She sent for me, made her bitter complaint to me, and sadly bewailed her condition: Then she told me (which before I knew not) how she had spent her life, how careful she had been in *searching her ways*, in observing how she spent every day, and how exact in collecting *Evidences for Heaven*: The Book was sent for, I read a great part of it to her, and took much delight and content in what I read. And it pleased God to come to her with comfort in the reading of it. She shewed her *Staff*, and her *Bracelets*, and thereby quenched the fiery darts of the Devil.

Thus I have in three Sermons, taught you how to make use of *Scripture Promises*, as *Conduits of Soul-supportation*, and *Soul-consolation* in the day of distress. When you hereafter read the *Bible*, remember the Promising word (as well as the Commanding and Threatning word) make a *Catalogue*

of the promises, meditate upon the *preciousness*, *freeness*, *usefulness*, *latitude*, *richness*, and *immutability* of them. They are as certain as God himself, they have the strength of God, the comforts of God, and assistance of God in them. Above all, labour to make Application of them to your own Soul. For this purpose, study these thirteen Rules and Directions. Pray unto God to give thee *spiritual Eyes*, to see thy interest in them, and *spiritual Hands* to reach out after them. Pray to God to give thee *spiritual ability*, to act faith upon the Promises, to draw vertue from them, as the Woman who had the bloody Issue, did from Christ, to suck out all the sweetness that is in them, to hang upon them, as the Woman did upon the Prophet, and as the Bee doth upon a flower, and by application of them to thy Soul, to live in God, and on God here, till thou comest to enjoy the blessings promised with God for ever in Heaven.

There is one Objection behind, which when I have answered, I have done. For a distressed Christian will object, and say :

Object. Though the Promises are rare Cordials, and shall all of them be certainly fulfilled, yet God is oftentimes long before he fulfills them, and while God is fulfilling of his Promises, I may in the mean time perish in my Afflictions.

Ans. It cannot be denied, but Gen. 3. 15. that God is oftentimes very long in Luk. 18. 7. 8. fulfilling his Promises. He promised that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpents Head ; But it was four thousand years before that promise was actually accomplished. He promised to avenge his Elect of all
their

their Enemies, to do it speedily. And the Souls under the Altar cry, How long Lord, when wilt thou avenge our Blood? &c. But this is not yet fulfilled. Rev. 6 to.

Nay, I must add, that God is not only a long time performing his promises, but sometimes instead of performing them, he seems to the eye of flesh and blood to walk contrary to them. *Sometimes the Providences of God run cross to his Promises.* God promised to make *David* King; in stead of this, he is Persecuted by *Saul*, as a *Partridge upon the Mountains*, he is driven to that extremity, that he begins to doubt of Gods Promise, and to say, *That one day he should dye* I Sam. 27. *by the hand of Saul.* God promised to *Joseph*, *That the Sun, Moon, and Stars should worship him*, and that his *sheaf should be lifted up above the sheaf of his Brethren.* But he finds the quite contrary, his Brethren seek to *slay him*, sell him into *Aegypt*, and there he is put in Prison as one quite forsaken of God. But yet notwithstanding all this, you must know, That though the way of God in performing his promises, be very mysterious and secret, yet he will at last perform every word, and tittle of them. Thus *David* was at last made King of *Israel*, and *Joseph* Lord of *Aegypt*, and his Brethren came all to Worship him.

Quest. *How must we carry and behave our selves at such times, when Providences seem to run cross unto Gods Promises?*

Ans. At such times there are three things required of us.

Three duties to be practised when providences run cross to promises.

Isa. 28. 16.

1 It is our duty to wait *patiently* and *believingly*, till *Providences* and *Promises* meet together. *He that believeth, maketh not haste.* The Prophet there speaks of a glorious promise, and adds. That a true Saint will wait Gods time, which is the fittest and best time. He will *patiently* expect till God fulfil his promise: He will do as the Martyr did, who might have escaped privately out of prison, and was

tempted to it by his friends, But answered, *He would not go out of prison when his enemies would have him, for they would make him tarry longer than he should, nor yet when his friends would have him for they would make him tarry a lesser time than he should; but he would come out when God would have him.* Gods time is the best; and they are too enough delivered, who are delivered in Gods way, and at Gods time. This then is thy great duty (O Christian) to wait *patiently*,

and *believingly*, and not to seek by unlawful ways to be rid of thy miseries, as David did by going to the *Philistins*; and as many in Queen *Maries* days did, by yielding to the Popish superstitions. To help you to wait Gods leisure, holding Faith and a good Conscience; you have

1. Many rare and precious promises made to those that wait upon him; which I have formerly named

2. You have four Attributes in God to support you, his *Faithfulness*, *Almightiness*, *infinite Goodness* and *Wisdom*. He is *Faithful*, and not one tittle of his Word shall fall to the ground: He is *Almighty*, and able to do whatsoever he hath promised: He is *infinitely Wise*, to know the best time and season, and

infinitely

infinitely Good and Loving to his Children, and doth not willingly afflict them, but will make hast to help them. Lam. 3, 35.

2. It is our Duty to live upon Promises, while Providences seem to run cross to Promises. This is the meaning of Hab. 2. 4. *The Just shall live by Faith.* They shall live by faith, when they have nothing else to live on. When sense and reason tell them, they are undone, then shall they live by faith in the promises and not only live patiently, but comfortably, and joyfully; as the same Prophet saith, Hab. 3. 17, 18, 19. *Although the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the Vine, and the field shall yield no meat &c. yet I will rejoyce in the Lord. I will joy in the God of my Salvation.* This life did Paul live, when the Ship in which he was, was ready to be drowned, when there was neither Sun-light, nor Star-light, yet he was exceedingly chearful, because God had promised to preserve him, and those with him. By living this life, God is much honoured, and our souls much quieted and refreshed. Act. 27. 20, 23, 24.

3. It is our duty to continue praying till Providences and Promises meet together: For it is Prayer and Praying only, which will at last reconcile Gods Promises, and Gods Dispensations, and cause them to meet, and to kiss one another: For as the Promises are ground and rule of our Prayers; so our Prayers are the divine ways and means for the obtaining of the promises. I say as the promises are;

1. The ground of our Prayers. For we cannot pray in Faith, unless we have some Promises to bottom our Prayers upon; therefore David often chargeth God in his Prayers with his Promise. He harps eight times upon the same string in one Psalm, to teach us, that the

Psal. 119.
28, 38, 41,
65, 76, 107,
142, 149.

greatest *Rhetorick and Oratory we can use in our prayers, is to urge God with his promise.*

2. They are not only the ground, but the rule of our prayers: As we must pray for nothing but what God hath promised, so we must regulate our Prayers according to Gods Promises. Those things which he hath absolutely promised, we must pray for absolutely, and where God hath put Conditions and Exceptions, there our prayers must be Conditional.

Now as the promises are the ground and rule of our prayers, so our prayers are divine means and helps for the obtaining of the promises. Though God hath made many glorious and precious Promises to his Children, yet he will perform none of them, but to those who by prayer seek them at his hands. When *Nathan* told *David*, what great things God had promised to him, he went into Gods house to pray for them, *2 Sam. 7.* The Prophet *Isaiah* mentioneth a glorious promise, *Isa. 43. 25.* but he adds, *Put me in remembrance,* verse 20. Thus *Ezek. 36. 37.* *I will yet for this, be inquired of by the House of Israel;* and therefore when you read the promises of the Bible, remember whatsoever God makes a promise, you must make a prayer, and that prayer will hasten the fulfilling of the promises: You must continue to pray, and faint not: For the *vision is but for an appointed time; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* This did *Daniel*, when he understood the time approached, &c. he prayed, *Dan. 9. 2, 3.* Thus did *David*, *Psal. 56. 9, 10. 57. 1, 2.* Thus must you do. These are the three great duties which the Lord requires of us at all times, but more especially in these our days, wherein the *Providences* of God seem to run quite cross unto his *Promises.* The Lord give us grace to practise them. So much for this Text. *The end of the 5th. Sermon.*

A brief Repetition of what was said of Mrs. *Eliz. Moore*, at her Burial.

THough I have finished my Text, yet I have another Text remaining, of which I must speak a few words; and that is, the party deceased, at whose Funeral we are here met.

She was a Woman) I verily believe) truly *Fearing God*, and yet throughout her whole life loaded with many and great troubles. God picked her out to be a *pattern of afflictions*, as he had not long before, that Reverend and Godly Minister, Mr. *Jeremiah Whitakers*.

This *Pattern* teacheth us three Lessons.

1. That all things come alike to all in this World, and that no Man knoweth love or hatred by any thing that is before him. The best of Saints sometimes are upon the Dung-hill when the vilest of Men are upon the Throne. The best of Men are afflicted, when the worst of Men are in prosperity.

2. That there is not so much *evil* in Affliction, or so much *good* in prosperity, as the World imagineth; For if there were, God would not bestow so much prosperity upon the wicked, and Exercise his dear Children with so many Afflictions.

3. That there will come a rewarding day, in which it shall certainly be well with the *Righteous*. When I see a wicked Man prosper, I say, surely there will come a *punishing day*, in which the wicked shall be turned into Hell. When I see a godly Man in adversity, I say, *Verily Psal. 98.*

there is a reward for the righteous, verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. Such examples prove, that there is another life besides this. And that if the Godly had hope only in this life, they were of all people most miserable.

I will not trouble you with a relation of her Christian carriage, in the time of her health, because it is sufficiently known to most here present. I shall only take notice of her great care and diligence in making her *Calling* and *Election* sure. She had not her Ark to build, when the Flood came, nor her Corn to get, when the seven years of Famine came: She had laid up a stock of graces and comforts against the evil hour; she had not her *Evidences for Heaven* to get, at the hour of death. But she had collected and composed them in the time of her life, and when she came to dye, she had neither her *Graces*, nor her *Comforts*, nor her *Evidences for Heaven* to seek, she had nothing to do but to dye.

Her sickness was very long, and very painful, concerning which I shall briefly acquaint you with these few particulars.

1. God moved the Hearts of very many Godly people, to take compassion of her sad and afflicted condition, and to contribute liberally (she being poor) towards her relief; this merciful Providence wonderfully comforted her: She saw Gods love in it, and was so much affected with it, that she was (for a little while) really, and exceedingly afraid (notwithstanding her great torments by reason of a Cancer in her breast) lest she should have her Heaven in this life and lest this mercy should be all her portion. The Lord recompence that labour of love, and that Christian charity a thousand fold into the bosoms of those who manifested so much kindness to her.

2. Her Patience was very great. As God increased her pains, he increased her patience, even to the admiration of such of us as were frequent spectators of it. She was brought to such a sweet frame of spirit, as to be *willing to live under all her torments*,

as long as God pleased, and to dye whensoever he pleased.

3. She was a woman of a very fearful nature, and in the time of her health, had many doubts and scruples (notwithstanding all her care forementioned) about her Salvation. But in her sickness, all her doubts vanished. God chained up Satan. The Devil had no power to tempt her, she felt a great calmness to her Soul, and had much inward peace, and enjoyed more of God, and his consolations; in the time of her sickness, than in the time of her health.

4. She was very forward in spreading and diffusing those graces which God had bestowed upon her, and in giving good counsel to those who visited her. I have heard her often, and often perswading her friends to prize health, and to improve it for the good of their Souls, to lay up against an evil day, and to stock themselves with grace before sickness come. She would frequently say, *O the benefit of health! O prize health! praise God for health, and improve health for your eternal good.*

5. She was very well vers't in the Scriptures. The Law of God was her delight, and this kept her from perishing in her affliction. She was continually fetching Cordials out of the Word, to comfort her under her great pains, and to preserve her from fainting. The 12. of the *Hebrews* was a precious Cordial unto her, so was the 8. of the *Romans*, and the 2. of the *Corinthians*, the 4. chapter, and the 17, 18. verses. *For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for the things which are seen, are temporal, but the things that are not seen, are eternal.

1 Cor. 15, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57.

For

For this corruptible, must put on incorruption, and this mortal, must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality; then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in Victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy Victory?

The sting of Death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law.

But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Phil. 3. 21. Who shall change our vile Body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

A little before her death she said, In the Lord Jehovah there is righteousness and strength; righteousness for justification, and strength for supportation. She said, that the Word of God was the best Cordial in the world: And that one minutes being in Heaven, would make amends for all her pain and misery.

6. And lastly, I cannot but take special notice of the happy close of her life, and of the blessed end she made. It is said of Job, James 5. 11, Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, &c. This our Christian Sister did in a great measure, partake both of Jobs pains, and Jobs patience, and made as happy an end, as he did, though in another kind. In the morning of that day in which she dyed she fell into a slumber, in which she heard (as she thought) one saying to her, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* Immediately she awaked full of joy, and though hardly able to speak, yet she uttered it to those who stood by, and was much comforted with it. Now though I am far from putting any confidence in dreams, and doubt not

not that a man may dream he shall go to Heaven, and yet be cast into Hell. Though I do not think that comfortable dreams are sufficient evidences of Salvation, (Nay, when they are brought as proofs of erroneous opinions, I account them *Diabolical delusions*; and when wicked men have them, *pleasant presumptions*.) Yet notwithstanding when a woman who hath spent many years in the service of God, and is visited by God for above a year, with great and most grievous pains, shall at the close of her life (when she is upon the very brink of eternity) have such a *sweet, refreshing, and heart-cheering impression upon her spirit*; when heart fails, and flesh fails: When she can hardly speak to express the greatness of her joy, then to hear a voice (as it were) saying to her, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. This (in all probability) was the voice of God, and not of Man. This was the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. I forbear saying any more. She is gone from a prison to a palace; from a purgatory to a paradise. She is at rest with God, where all tears are wiped away from her eyes: The Lord fit us by his Grace to follow her in due time into the Kingdom of Glory. AMEN.

Mrs. Elizabeth Moores

EVIDENCES for HEAVEN.

Collected by her self in the time of her Health, in such manner and method, as they are here presented to Publick view.

I. Her Design in this Collection.

IN the Examination of my self, I find that my Aims and Ends, why I desire to gather together, and

and clear up my *Evidences* for Heaven (if my deceitful heart doth not deceive me) are these following :

The first Design 1. That hereby (as a means) I may be enabled to glorifie God in the *great work of believing*, that hereby (with Gods blessing) the dim eyes of my Faith, may more clearly see the Lord Jesus Christ, to be a *Peace-maker* and *Reconciler*; and *Surety* for me, even for me, who am by nature a Fire-brand of Hell. The time was, I am sure, when I was the *Devils* Picture, and had the *black brand* of *Reprobation* upon me. and therefore it doth nearly concern me to search and try what *Evidences* I have to prove that God (fetching Arguments out of his own bowels, and the riches of his free grace) hath redeemed me out of this lost estate.

The second Design. 2. My *Aim* is to strengthen that longed for grace of *Assurance*, A grace which though it be not of absolute necessity for the *being* and *salvation*, yet is of absolute necessity for the *well-being* and *consolation* of a Christian; without this grace I can neither live nor dye comfortably, and I have been often exhorted by Gods faithful *Ambassadors*, to gather together my Scripture *Evidences*, and to have the approbation of some Godly and Experienced Minister or Christian; and this by Gods blessing may be a means to strengthen Assurance: Yea I find in Scripture, that the Lord saith, that the *Priests* lips shall preserve knowledge, and thou shalt seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the *Messenger* of the Lord of Hosts.

Mal. 3. 7.

The third Design.

Phil. 2. 12.

3. My *Aim* is to obey God in his word, who hath commanded me by his Apostle, To work out my own salvation with fear and trembling, and to give all

all diligence to make my calling and election sure: And I am exhorted to examine my self, and prove my self, whether I be in the faith or no: Know ye not (saith the Apostle) that Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates: And if any man be in Christ, he is a new Creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new. 2 Pet. 1.10. 2 Cor. 13.5.

Now then to prove whether I be indeed and in truth born again, is my desire at this time, the Lord help me; and give me a sincere and upright heart, and guide me herein by his holy Spirit, for the honour of his Holy Name.

2. A brief Collection of her Evidences for Heaven.

Blessed Be God, who hath through his free mercy begotten me to a hope, that I am regenerated and born from above, and converted unto God. First Evidence.

Reason, Because the Lord hath gone the same usual way with me, as with those he pleaseth to convert to himself, and this I shall make to appear in five or six particulars.

1. The Lord by his Spirit accompanying the Preaching of his word, caused the scales to fall from my eyes, and opened them, and set up a clear light in my understanding and made me to see sin to be exceeding sinful, out of measure sinful, and to look on it as the loathsome thing in the world, and on my self as a loathsome creature in Gods sight, and in my own sight, by reason of the Leprosie of sin, wherewith I was over-run.

2. The Lord brought me to see the misery that I was in, by reason of my sins. I thought I was utterly forsaken of God, and I thought that God would never accept of such a wretch as I saw my self to be. I could not think otherwise, but that Hell was my portion, and that I, by reason of my sins,

sins, must go thither, expecting every day when the Lord would glorifie himself in my Damnation. I saw my self in more misery, because of my sins, than I could then, or now expresse to any body. I looked upon God as a *consuming fire*, and on my self as *straw*, ready to be consumed by him, &c.

3. The Lord brought me to a spiritual astonishment, that I cryed out, *What shall I do to be saved?* and said with *Paul*, Lord! *What wouldst thou have me to do?* Do but make known to thy poor creature, what thy will is, and I thought I could do any thing, or suffer any thing for the Lord. But since I have had some more knowledge of the holy Will of God, woe is me! what a barren and unfruitful heart have I! a heart that can neither do nor suffer any thing for the Lord as I ought to do: But this I can say, that the astonishment I was in by the sight of my sins, and the misery I was plunged into, put me on the performance of holy duties, especially prayer.

4. The Lord took me off my own bottom, off my own righteousness, and made me to see that that was but a *sandy foundation*, and would not hold out. I was not taken off from the performance of holy duties; no, I thought with my self that I am commanded by God, to perform holy duties, which is the way and means whereby we may meet with God (For he is ordinarily to be enjoyed no where but in his own Ordinances) but the Lord took me off from resting and trusting in Ordinances. And as he made me to see that without the practise of them he would not accept of me; so also he made me to know that it was not for holy duties, for which I was accepted. The sins that cleave to my best performances, are enough, for which the Lord may justly condemn me, if I had no other sins.

5. The Lord brought me to see a *Superlative beauty*

ty and excellency in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my Soul was deeply in love with him, even with whole Christ in all his offices, and (if I know any thing at all of my own heart) I desired Christ as much to be my King and Prophet, to teach and guide me, and subdue me to himself, and rule over me, as to be my High Priest, to make Attonement by offering up of himself for me, and washing me in his blood, by which I must be justified.

6. The Lord brought me to see a *soul-sanctification* in the Lord Jesus Christ alone; and I think I should be as fully satisfied with Christ alone, as my heart can desire. If I know my heart, it panteth after Christ, and Christ alone: *None but Christ, none but Christ*. The whole word in comparison or competition with Christ, is nothing to me: But in him I see full contentment. To see and know my interest in him, and to enjoy communion with him, is that, which if the Lord would bestow upon me, I should wish Jacob say, *It is enough*; and with old Simeon; *Now let thy Servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy Salvation*.

Now I desire to set down some other Scripture-Evidences, that I find upon search and examination of my Heart, by laying it to the Rule, the Word of God.

My second Scripture Evidence is taken from Mark 2 17. Where Christ *Second Evi-*
 faith, *They that are whole, have no need of* *dence.*
the Physitian, but they that are sick; and
he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repen-
tance. Now through Gods mercy I can say, I am
 a *sin-sick-sinner* (the Lord make me more sick) I
 am not righteous in mine own eyes, but a sinner,
 and see my self undone for ever, without the right-
 eousness of Christ be imputed to me, and there-
 fore I hope I am among the number of those
 whom

whom Christ was commissioned by his Father to come to save.

From *Matth. 11. 28, 29.* I am weary and heavy laden; now Christ hath promised to give ease to such. And I am willing to take his yoke upon me, and would fain learn of him the lesson of meekness and lowliness, and therefore am invited to come unto him.

I can say with *David*, that my sins are a heavy burden to me, they are too heavy for me, *Psal. 38. 4.* and I can say that I mourn, because I can mourn no more for my sins; now Christ saith, *Bl'ssed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted, Mat. 5. 4.*

From *Mat. 5. 3.* I think (if my heart do not deceive me) I am poor in spirit: now theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven saith Christ.

From *Mat. 12. 20.* I am a bruised reed, and smoking flax; and therefore Christ hath promised he will not break such a reed, nor quench the smother of grace, if it be true grace, but he will increase it more and more (as he saith) *Until Judgment break forth into Victory:* And he came to set at liberty them that are bruised, *Luk. 4. 18.* Therefore I hope I am such a one as he came to bind up and set at liberty; Yea and that he was anointed and sent by his Father to me, and such as I am, *1 a. 61. 1.*

From *1 Tim. 1. 15.* This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation (saith Paul) that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners: And so say I too; it is worthy all acceptation, that Christ should come from the bosom of his Father. who was infinitely glorious and happy, that he should come

come into the world to save me, me a sinner, me the chief of sinners; me, that if saved, I do verily believe, there is none in Heaven, nor any that ever shall come thither, that hath or will have the cause to magnifie and adore free-grace, as I shall have. And herein doth God commend his love towards me. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life, Rom. 5. 10.

I can say with Paul, that I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man, and I am grieved that I cannot keep it. I find that spiritual war in me, between flesh and spirit, which Paul complaineth of, and I can say, that Paul doth confess over my heart in his confessions, Rom. 7. And I can go along with him there, from verse 9. to the end of the chapter; and from hence I gather, that there is some spiritual life in my Soul, and an endeavour to walk after the spirit, and therefore I hope and desire to conclude with him, that there shall be no condemnation to me, but that the Law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make me free from the Law of sin, and death. I find an earnest desire wrought in my Soul, to be made like unto Jesus Christ, and that it may be my meat and drink to do and suffer his will, as he would have me.

Eighth Evidence.

I can say, that the Lord hath in some measure put his fear into my heart, that I fear to offend him, out of love to him, and I love to fear him.

Rom 8. 1, 2.

I can say with the Church to Christ, Cant. 1. 7. O thou whom my Soul loveth: (and if I know any thing at all of mine own heart) Christ is altogether lovely, and most desirable to my Soul.

Ninth Evidence.

I can say with the Church to Christ, Cant. 1. 7. O thou whom my Soul loveth: (and if I know any thing at all of mine own heart) Christ is altogether lovely, and most desirable to my Soul.

Tenth Evidence.

I can say with the Church to Christ, Cant. 1. 7. O thou whom my Soul loveth: (and if I know any thing at all of mine own heart) Christ is altogether lovely, and most desirable to my Soul.

I think I can truly say with *David*, *That I have none in Heaven but thee, and there is nothing on Earth that I desire besides thee, in comparison of thee, in competition with thee.* Though all that is dearest to me in the world, should forsake me, yet if God whom I have chosen for my *portion*, will not forsake me, I have enough. It is my desire and endeavour more and more to *account all things but loss and dung*, that I may win Christ. I can with *Peter* make my appeal to him, and say, *Lord, thou who knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, and that it is the desire of my Soul to love thee more, and to love thee for thy self, because thou art holy, and good, and gracious, and the chiefest among ten thousand; Yea, God in Christ alone, is worthy to be beloved, and it is my highest privilege, that he will give me leave to love him, who only can satisfy my Soul and redeem it from death eternal, who hath justified me by his blood, and sanctified me by his Spirit, whom therefore I love with all my Heart, and all my Soul, and all my might, and all my Strength.* Finding therefore, that God hath drawn out my Heart to love him, and make choice of him alone; I from hence gather and ground my hope that God loveth me, according to that Scripture, *1 John 4. 19. We love him, because he first loved us.*

I find my Heart much inflamed
 Eleventh with love to all the Children of God,
 Evidence. because they are Gods Children, and the
 more I see, or find, or hear of God
 in them, the more I find my heart cleaving to
 them, and I think I can truly say with *David*, *That my delight is in the Saints, and those that excel in grace;*
 not because they are friends to me, or I have relation to them, in regard of outward obligations,
 but because they bear the Image of God upon
 them,

them, and manifest it in their holy Conversation. I love them, whether Rich or Poor. And though I did never know some of them, but only hear of their holiness, and piety, yet I could not not but exceedingly love such. Therefore I hope that I am passed from death to life, because I love the Brethren, 1 Joh. 3. 14.

I do not only love God, and the Children of God, but I labour to keep his Commandments, and they are not grievous to me. But I pray with David, *O that my ways were directed to keep thy Statutes! Lord enlarge my heart, and I will run the ways of thy Commandments. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy Law, yea, I shall observe it with my whole heart; for therein do I delight.*

Twelfth

Evidence.

1 John 5. 3.

Psal. 119.

5.V. 32. 34.

I find I am one that is very thirsty after Jesus Christ, and the grace of Christ: and I thirst to have his Image more and more stamped upon me; and I would fain be assured by Gods Spirit, that I am Transplanted into Christ, and therefore I long, and endeavour after a true and lively Faith, because that Grace is a Soul transplanting and uniting Grace. Now Christ hath promised to satisfy the thirsty, Mat. 5. 6. and such Christ hath earnestly invited to come, though they have nothing to bring, but what may make against themselves, yet to come empty, and he hath promised to fill them, Isa. 55. 1, 2.

Thirteenth

Evidence

I am willing to confess, and with all my heart to forsake all my sins. I am willing to give glory to God, in taking shame unto my self. I acknowledge my self a guilty Malefactor, and judge my self worthy of the just Condemnation of the Righteous Judge of all the Earth. And I do not only

Fourteenth

Evidence.

only confess my sins, but with all my heart I desire to forsake them, and to turn to the Lord: Now he hath said, he *will have mercy on such, and will abundantly pardon them*; For *his thoughts are not as our thoughts nor his ways, as our ways*, Isa. 55. 7, 8. It is my constant endeavour, to dye to sin, to live to newness of life. And this is my comfort, and hope, that he who hath begun a good work in me, will perfect it. For it is he that *worketh all our works in us*, and for us, Isa. 26. 12. and he that hath wrought in me to *will*, to do that which is pleasing in his sight, will work in me to *do* also, and that of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13.

I hope I am one whom God hath taken into Covenant with himself, Fifteenth Evidence. because he hath bestowed upon me the fruits of the Covenant, because he hath *circumcised my heart* to love him, and hath put his *fear into me*, and hath wrought an universal change in me, and hath given me a *new heart*, and a *new spirit*; yea his own Spirit which he hath put within me, even the *Spirit of Truth, which will guide me into all Truth*. It is his own promise to *give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it of him* (as I have done often) Luke 11. 13. and I hope that God will make it in his due time, a *witnessing*, and a *comforting Spirit*. I will wait upon him for the accomplishment of all his Promises, both of *Grace*, and to *Grace*. He hath said, he will be a *Sun* and a *Shield*, he will give *Grace and Glory*, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. And he hath promised to subdue our *sins* for us; and hath said, *That sin shall not have dominion over us*, Rom. 6. 14. *That he will be our God, and we shall be his children*; and *he will save us from all our uncleannesses*. I hope I have a share in this blessed Covenant of free Grace.

As for my *Affliction* that lyeth upon me (though it be in it self very heavy) I much more desire the *sanctification* of it, than the *removal*. I earnestly labour to learn all those lessons which God teacheth me by *Affliction*; I know I should not be scourged, nor be in tribulation, but that I have need of it *it is for my profit, to make me partaker of his holiness*. Afflictions are an evidence of *Sonship*, Heb. 12. 6, 7, 8. God hath promised, that *all things shall work together for good to them that love and fear him*. And I have had much experience of his faithfulness, who hath not suffered me to be tempted above what he hath enabled me to bear; therefore *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him*. He hath chastised me less than mine iniquities deserve. He chastiseth me here, that he may not condemn me hereafter.

Sixteenth
Evidence.

Faith is the condition of Salvation: *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. And this is his Commandment, that we should believe in his Son Jesus Christ*: Now I find nothing so hard to me as to believe aright; to cast away all my own righteousness as dung, in point of justification, and to cast away all my *unrighteousness*, so as that be no bar to me and to role, and cast, and venture my immortal soul upon Jesus Christ and his Righteousness, for life and salvation by him alone, and to see my self compleat in him; this is supernatural. Yet I must and will give glory to God and say, *Lord I believe, help thou my unbelief*. And by this I prove, that this precious grace of Faith is wrought in me, because Jesus Christ is to me very precious: And I find in the Word, that *to them that believe he is precious*: And I am willing to

Seven-
teenth E-
vidence.
Acts 16. 31.
1 Joh. 3. 23.

1 Pet. 2. 7.

to take Christ upon his own terms, as he is rendered in the Gospel; and am willing to give up my self, soul and body wholly to him, and my love to God, and to the Children of God, is a fruit of my Faith, as also my desire to be made like unto him: For he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure, 1 Joh. 3. 3. And I trust that I am kept by the power of God, through faith unto Salvation, 1 Pet. 1. 5. I know whom I have believed, and 2 Tim. 1. 12. I am persuaded that he is able and willing to keep that which I have committed unto him, which is my immortal Soul.

Thus I have, according to the Apostles exhortation endeavoured to give a reason of the hope that is in me. What have I but what I have received? The desire of my soul is, that God may have all the Glory. And if I be deceived, the Lord for Christs sake undeceive me, and grant that if I have not true Grace, I may not think I have, and so be in a Fools Paradise. And the Lord that is my Heart-maker, be my Heart-searcher, and my Heart-discoverer, and my Heart-reformer. A M E N.

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F I N I S

